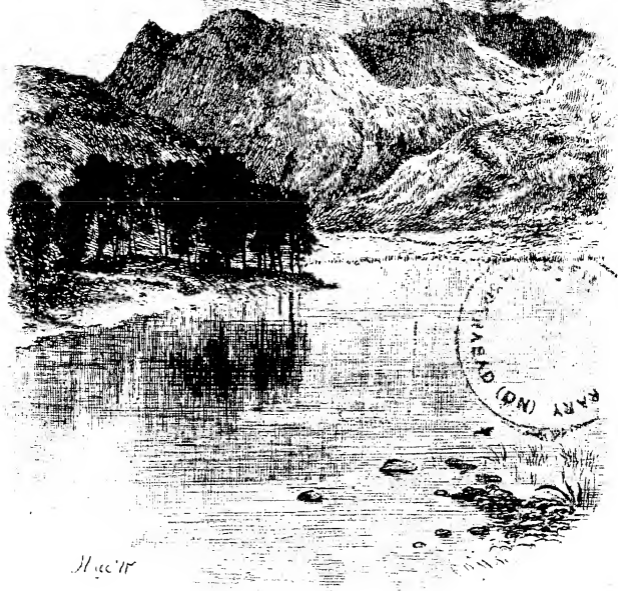


THE POETICAL WORKS OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.



BLEA TARN.

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

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WILLIAM PATERSON

PREFATORY NOTE.

WHILE reserving for the last volume my acknowledgments in detail to those who have assisted me in various ways, I take this opportunity of expressing my special thanks to Mrs Wordsworth, and to Mr Gordon Wordsworth (the Stepping Stones, Ambleside), for the access they have generously given me to the MSS. of the Poet's works, some results of which may, I trust, be seen in Volumes VI. and VII.

I have also specially to thank Mr J. R. Tutin, of Hull, for his assistance. Mr Tutin has compared the proof with the text of the successive editions; and, owing to his careful revision, I have been able to make both corrections and additions to that part of the work in Volumes III., IV., and V.

What I owe to the suggestions and researches of Mr Henry Reed, Philadelphia, will be seen in the Notes to *The Excursion*; but I am indebted to him for much besides, which can only be adequately acknowledged in the Life of the Poet in Volume VIII.

W. K.

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WORDSWORTH'S POETICAL WORKS.

THE EXCURSION.

Comp. 1795-1814. — Pub. 1814.

[Something must now be said of this poem, but chiefly, as has been done through the whole of these notes, with reference to my personal friends, and especially to her who has perseveringly taken them down from my dictation. Towards the close of the first book, stand the lines that were first written,—beginning “Nine tedious years,” and ending “Last human tenant of these ruined walls.” These were composed in 1795, at Racedown; and for several passages describing the employment and demeanour of Margaret during her affliction, I was indebted to observations made in Dorsetshire, and afterwards at Alfoxden, in Somersetshire, where I resided in 1797 and 1798. The lines towards the conclusion of the fourth book, *Despondency corrected*,—beginning “For the man who in this spirit,” to the words “intellectual soul,”—were in order of time composed the next, either at Racedown or Alfoxden, I do not remember which. The rest of the poem was written in the vale of Grasmere, chiefly during our residence at Allan Bank. The long poem on my own education was, together with many minor poems, composed while we lived at the cottage at Town-End. Perhaps my purpose of giving an additional interest to these my poems, in the eyes of my nearest and dearest friends, may be promoted by saying a few words upon the character of the Wanderer, the Solitary, and the Pastor, and some other of the persons introduced. And first of the principal one, the Wanderer.

My lamented friend Southey (for this is written a month after his decease*) used to say that had he been a Papist, the course of life which would in all probability have been his, was the one for which he was most fitted and most to his mind, that of a Benedictine monk, in a convent, furnished, as many once were, and some still are, with an inexhaustible library. *Books*, as appears from many passages in his writings, and was evident to those who had opportunities of observing his daily life, were in fact *his passion*; and *wandering*, I can with truth affirm, was *mine*; but this propensity in me was happily counteracted by inability from want of fortune to fulfil my wishes.

But had I been born in a class which would have deprived me of

* Southey died on the 21st of March, 1843.—Ed.

what is called a liberal education, it is not unlikely that, being strong in body, I should have taken to a way of life such as that in which my Pedlar passed the greater part of his days. At all events, I am here called upon freely to acknowledge that the character I have represented in his person is chiefly an idea of what I fancied my own character might have become in his circumstances. Nevertheless much of what he says and does had an external existence, that fell under my own youthful and subsequent observation.

An individual, named Patrick, by birth and education a Scotchman, followed this humble occupation for many years, and afterwards settled in the town of Kendal.* He married a kinswoman of my wife's, and her sister Sarah was brought up from her ninth year under this good man's roof.† My own imaginations I was happy to find clothed in reality, and fresh ones suggested, by what she reported of this man's tenderness of heart, his strong and pure imagination, and his solid attainments in literature, chiefly religious, whether in prose or verse. At Hawkshead also, while I was a school-boy, there occasionally resided a Packman (the name then generally given to persons of this calling), with whom I had frequent conversations upon what had befallen him, and what he had observed, during his wandering life; and, as was natural, we took much to each other; and, upon the subject of *Pedlarism* in general, as *then* followed, and its favourableness to an intimate knowledge of human concerns, not merely among the humbler classes of society, I need say nothing here in addition to what is to be found in *The Excursion*, and a note attached to it.

Now for the Solitary. Of him I have much less to say. Not long after we took up our abode at Grasmere, came to reside there, from what motive I either never knew or have forgotten, a Scotchman, a little past the middle of life, who had for many years been chaplain to a Highland regiment. He was in no respect, as far as I know, an interesting character, though in his appearance there was a good deal that attracted attention, as if he had been shattered in fortune, and not happy in mind. Of his quondam position I availed myself to connect with the Wanderer, also a Scotchman, a character suitable to my purpose, the elements of which I drew from several persons with whom I had been connected, and who fell under my observation during frequent residences in London at the beginning of the French Revolution. The chief of these was, one may now say, a Mr Fawcett, a preacher at a Dissenting meeting-house at the Old Jewry. It happened to me several times to be one of his congregation through my connection with Mr Nicholson of Cateaton Street, Strand, who, at a time when I had not many acquaintances in London, used often to invite me to dine with him on Sundays; and I took that opportunity (Mr N. being a Dissenter)

* See the Appendix to this volume, Note A.—ED.

† In pencil on the opposite page of the MS.—“Sarah went to Kendal on our mother's death, but Mr P. died in the course of a year or two.”—M. W.

of going to hear Fawcett, who was an able and eloquent man. He published a poem on War, which had a good deal of merit, and made me think more about him than I should otherwise have done. But his Christianity was probably never very deeply rooted ; and, like many others in those times of like shewy talents, he had not strength of character to withstand the effects of the French Revolution, and of the wild and lax opinions which had done so much towards producing it, and far more in carrying it forward in its extremes. Poor Fawcett, I have been told, became pretty much such a person as I have described, and early disappeared from the stage, having fallen into habits of intemperance, which I have heard (though I will not answer for the fact) hastened his death. Of him I need say no more. There were many like him at that time, which the world will never be without, but which were more numerous then, for reasons too obvious to be dwelt upon.

To what is said of the Pastor in the poem, I have little to add but what may be deemed superfluous. It has ever appeared to me highly favourable to the beneficial influence of the Church of England upon all gradations and classes of society, that the patronage of its benefices is in numerous instances attached to the estates of noble families of ancient gentry ; and accordingly I am gratified by the opportunity afforded me in *The Excursion*, to pourtray the character of a country clergyman of more than ordinary talents, born and bred in the upper ranks of society so as to partake of their refinements, and at the same time brought by his pastoral office and his love of rural life into intimate connection with the peasantry of his native district.

To illustrate the relation which in my mind this Pastor bore to the Wanderer, and the resemblances between them, or rather the points of community in their nature, I likened one to an oak, and the other to a sycamore ; and having here referred to this comparison, I need only add, I had no one individual in my mind, wishing rather to embody this idea than to break in upon the simplicity of it by traits of individual character, or of any peculiarity of opinion.

And now for a few words upon the scene where these interviews and conversations are supposed to occur.

The scene of the first book of the poem is, I must own, laid in a tract of country not sufficiently near to that which soon comes into view in the second book, to agree with the fact. All that relates to Margaret, and the ruined cottage, &c., was taken from observations made in the south-west of England, and certainly it would require more than seven-league boots to stretch in one morning, from a common in Somersetshire, or Dorsetshire, to the heights of Furness Fells, and the deep valleys they embosom. For thus dealing with space, I need make, I trust, no apology ; but my friends may be amused by the truth.

In the poem, I suppose that the Pedlar and I ascended from a plain country up the vale of Langdale, and struck off a good way above the chapel to the western side of the vale. We ascended the hill, and

thence looked down upon the circular recess in which lies Blea Tarn, chosen by the Solitary for his retreat. After we quit his cottage, passing over a low ridge, we descend into another vale, that of Little Langdale, towards the head of which stands embowered, or partly shaded by yews and other trees, something between a cottage and a mansion, or gentleman's house, such as they once were in this country. This I convert into the parsonage, and at the same time, and as by the waving of a magic wand, I turn the comparatively confined vale of Langdale, its tarn, and the rude chapel which once adorned the valley, into the stately and comparatively spacious vale of Grasmere and its ancient parish church; and upon the side of Loughrigg fell, at the foot of the lake, and looking down upon it and the whole vale and its accompanying mountains, the Pastor is supposed by me to stand, when at sunset he addresses his companions in words which I hope my readers may remember,* or I should not have taken the trouble of giving so much in detail the materials on which my mind actually worked.

Now for a few particulars of *fact*, respecting the persons whose stories are told or characters described by the different speakers. To Margaret I have already alluded. I will add here that the lines beginning,

“She was a woman of a steady mind,”

and

“Live on earth a life of happiness,”

faithfully delineate, as far as they go, the character possessed in common by many women whom it has been my happiness to know in humble life; and that several of the most touching things which she is represented as saying and doing are taken from actual observation of the distresses and trials under which different persons were suffering, some of them strangers to me, and others daily under my notice.

I was born too late to have a distinct remembrance of the origin of the American war; but the state in which I represent Robert's mind to be, I had frequent opportunities of observing at the commencement of our rupture with France in 1793; opportunities of which I availed myself in the story of the Female Vagrant, as told in the poem on *Guilt and Sorrow*. The account given by the Solitary, towards the close of the second book, in all that belongs to the character of the old man, was taken from a Grasmere pauper, who was boarded in the last house quitting the vale on the road to Ambleside; the character of his hostess, and all that befell the poor man upon the mountain, belongs to Paterdale. The woman I knew well; her name was Ruth Jackson, and she was exactly such a person as I describe. The ruins of the old chapel, among which the old man was found lying, may yet be traced, and stood upon the ridge that divides Paterdale from Boar-dale and Martindale, having been placed there for the convenience of both districts. The glorious appearance disclosed above and among

* *The Excursion*; book the last, near the conclusion.

the mountains, was described partly from what my friend Mr Luff, who then lived in Paterdale, witnessed upon that melancholy occasion, and partly from what Mrs Wordsworth and I had seen, in company with Sir George and Lady Beaumont, above Hartshope Hall, on our way from Paterdale to Ambleside.

And now for a few words upon the Church, its Monuments, and of the Deceased who are spoken of as lying in the surrounding churchyard. But first for the one picture given by the Pastor and the Wanderer of the Living. In this nothing is introduced but what was taken from nature, and real life. The cottage was called Hackett, and stands, as described, on the southern extremity of the ridge which separates the two Langdales. The pair who inhabited it were called Jonathan and Betty Yewdale. Once when our children were ill, of whooping-cough, I think, we took them for change of air to this cottage, and were in the habit of going there to drink tea upon fine summer afternoons, so that we became intimately acquainted with the characters, habits, and lives of these good, and let me say, in the main, wise people. The matron had, in her early youth, been a servant in a house at Hawkshead, where several boys boarded, while I was a schoolboy there. I did not remember her as having served in that capacity; but we had many little anecdotes to tell to each other of remarkable boys, incidents, and adventures, which had made a noise in their day in that small town. These two persons were induced afterwards to settle at Rydal, where they both died.

The church, as already noticed, is that of Grasmere. The interior of it has been improved lately and made warmer by underdrawing the roof, and raising the floor; but the rude and antique majesty of its former appearance has been impaired by painting the rafters; and the oak benches, with a simple rail at the back dividing them from each other, have given way to seats that have more the appearance of pews. It is remarkable that, excepting only the pew belonging to Rydal Hall, that to Rydal Mount, the one to the Parsonage, and I believe another, the men and women still continue, as used to be the custom in Wales, to sit separate from each other. Is this practice as old as the Reformation? and when and how did it originate? In the Jewish synagogues, and in Lady Huntingdon's chapels, the sexes are divided in the same way. In the adjoining churchyard greater changes have taken place. It is now not a little crowded with tombstones; and near the school-house, which stands in the churchyard, is an ugly structure, built to receive the hearse, which is recently come into use. It would not be worth while to allude to this building, or the hearse-vehicle it contains, but that the latter has been the means of introducing a change much to be lamented in the mode of conducting funerals among the mountains. Now, the coffin is lodged in the hearse at the door of the house of the deceased, and the corpse is so conveyed to the churchyard gate. All the solemnity which formerly attended its progress, as described in this poem, is put an end

to. So much do I regret this, that I beg to be excused for giving utterance here to a wish that, should it befall me to die at Rydal Mount, my own body may be carried to Grasmere Church after the manner in which, till lately, that of every one was borne to the place of sepulture here, namely, on the shoulders of neighbours; no house being passed without some words of a funeral psalm being sung at the time by the attendants bearing it. When I put into the mouth of the Wanderer, "Many precious rites and customs of our rural ancestry are gone, or stealing from us," "this, I hope, will last for ever," and what follows, little did I foresee that the observance and mode of proceeding which had often affected me so much would so soon be superseded.

Having said much of the injury done to this churchyard, let me add, that one is at liberty to look forward to a time when, by the growth of the yew-trees thriving there, a solemnity will be spread over the place that will in some degree make amends for the old simple character which has already been so much encroached upon, and will be still more every year. I will here set down, by way of memorial, that my friend Sir George Beaumont, having long ago purchased the beautiful piece of water called Loughrigg Tarn, on the banks of which he intended to build, I told him that a person in Kendal who was attached to the place wished to purchase it. Sir George, finding the possession of no use to him, consented to part with it, and placed the purchase-money—£20—at my disposal, for any local use which I thought proper. Accordingly, I resolved to plant yew-trees in the churchyard; and had four pretty strong large oak enclosures made, in each of which was planted, under my own eye, and principally if not entirely by my own hand, two young trees, with the intention of leaving the one that throve best to stand. Many years after, Mr Barber, who will long be remembered in Grasmere, Mr Greenwood (the chief landed proprietor), and myself, had four other enclosures made in the churchyard at our own expense, in each of which was planted a tree taken from its neighbour, and they all stand thriving admirably, the fences having been removed as no longer necessary. May the trees be taken care of hereafter, when we are all gone; and some of them will perhaps, at some far-distant time, rival the majesty of the yew of Lorton, and those which I have described as growing at Borrowdale, where they are still to be seen in grand assemblage.*

And now for the persons that are selected as lying in the churchyard. But first for the individual whose grave is prepared to receive him.

His story is here truly related. He was a schoolfellow of mine for some years. He came to us when he was at least seventeen years of age, very tall, robust, and full grown. This prevented him from falling into the amusements and games of the school; consequently, he gave more time to books. He was not remarkably bright or quick, but, by industry, he made a progress more than respectable. His parents

* Alas! no longer so in December 1883. See Note I in Appendix to this volume.—Ed.

not being wealthy enough to send him to college when he left Hawkshead, he became a schoolmaster, with a view to prepare himself for holy orders. About this time he fell in love, as related in the poem, and everything followed as there described, except that I do not know exactly when and where he died. The number of youths that came to Hawkshead school from the families of the humble yeomanry, to be educated to a certain degree of scholarship, as a preparation for the church, was considerable, and the fortunes of those persons in after life various of course, and some not a little remarkable. I have now one of this class in my eye who became an usher in a preparatory school, and ended in making a large fortune. His manners, when he came to Hawkshead, were as uncouth as well could be; but he had good abilities, with skill to turn them to account; and when the master of the school, to which he was usher, died, he stepped into his place and became proprietor of the establishment. He continued to manage it with such address, and so much to the taste of what is called high society and the fashionable world, that no school of the kind, even till he retired, was in such high request. Ministers of State, the wealthiest gentry, and nobility of the first rank, vied with each other in bespeaking a place for their sons in the seminary of this fortunate teacher.* In the solitude of Grasmere, while living as a married man in a cottage of £8 per annum rent, I often used to smile at the tales which reached me of the brilliant career of this quondam clown—for such in reality he was, in manners and appearance, before he was polished a little by attrition with gentlemen's sons trained at Hawkshead, rough and rude as many of our families were. Not 200 yards from the cottage in Grasmere just mentioned, to which I retired, this gentleman, who many years afterwards purchased a small estate in the neighbourhood, is now erecting a boat-house, with an upper story to be resorted to as an entertaining room when he and his associates may feel inclined to take their pastime on the lake. Every passenger will be disgusted with the sight of this edifice, not merely as a tasteless thing in itself, but as utterly out of place, and peculiarly fitted, as far as it is observed (and it obtrudes itself on notice at every point of view), to mar the beauty and destroy the pastoral simplicity of the vale. For my own part, and that of my household, it is our utter detestation, standing by a shore to which, before the high road was made to pass that way, we used daily and hourly to repair for seclusion and for the shelter of a grove, under which I composed many of my poems—*The Brothers* especially; and for this reason we gave the grove that name.

“That which each man loved
And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
Dies with him, or is changed.”

So much for my old schoolfellow and his exploits. I will only add that, as the foundation has twice failed, from the Lake no doubt

* In pencil on the opposite page of the MS.—“Mr Pearson.”

being intolerant of the intrusion, there is some ground for hoping that the impertinent structure will not stand. It has been rebuilt in somewhat better taste, and much as one wishes it away, it is not now so very unsightly. The structure is an emblem of the man. Perseverance has conquered difficulties, and given something of form and polish to rudeness.*

The Miner, next described as having found his treasure after twice ten years of labour, lived in Paterdale, and the story is true to the letter. It seems to me, however, rather remarkable, that the strength of mind which had supported him through his long unrewarded labour, did not enable him to bear its successful issue. Several times in the course of my life I have heard of sudden influxes of great wealth being followed by derangement; and, in one instance, the shock of good fortune was so great as to produce absolute idiocy. But these all happened where there had been little or no previous effort to acquire the riches, and therefore such a consequence might the more naturally be expected, than in the case of the solitary miner. In reviewing his story, one cannot but regret that such perseverance was not sustained by a worthier object. Archimedes leaped out of his bath and ran about the streets, proclaiming his discovery in a transport of joy; but we are not told that he lost either his life or his senses in consequence.

The next character, to whom the priest is led by contrast with the resoluteness displayed by the foregoing, is taken from a person born and bred in Grasmere, by name Dawson; and whose talents, dispositions, and way of life, were such as are here delineated. I did not know him, but all was fresh in memory when we settled at Grasmere in the beginning of the century. From this point the conversation leads to the mention of two individuals, who, by their several fortunes, were, at different times, driven to take refuge at the small and obscure town of Hawkshead on the skirt of these mountains. Their stories I had from the dear old dame with whom, as a schoolboy, and afterwards, I lodged for the space of nearly ten years. The elder, the Jacobite, was named Drummond, and was of a high family in Scotland; the Hanoverian Whig bore the name of Vandeput,† and might, perhaps, be a descendant of some Dutchman who had come over in the train of King William. At all events, his zeal was such, that he ruined himself by a contest for the representation of London or Westminster, undertaken to support his Party, and retired to this corner of the world, selected (as it had been by Drummond) for that obscurity which, since visiting the Lakes became fashionable, it has no longer retained. So much was this region considered out of the way till a late period, that persons who had fled

* In pencil on the opposite page—"This boathouse, badly built, gave way, and was rebuilt. It again tumbled, and was a third time reconstructed, but in a better fashion than before. It is not now, *per se*, an ugly building, however obtrusive it may be."

† Sir George Vandeput.

from justice used often to resort hither for concealment, and some were so bold as to not unfrequently make excursions from the place of their retreat for the purpose of committing fresh offences. Such was particularly the case with two brothers of the name of Weston, who took up their abode at Old Brathay, I think about seventy years ago. They were highwaymen, and lived there some time without being discovered, though it was known that they often disappeared, in a way, and upon errands, which could not be accounted for. Their horses were noticed as being of a choice breed, and I have heard from the Relph family, one of whom was a saddler in the town of Kendal, that they were curious in their saddles, and housings, and accoutrements of their horses. They, as I have heard, and as was universally believed, were, in the end, both taken and hanged.

“Tall was her stature ; her complexion dark
And saturnine.”

This person lived at Town-End, and was almost our next neighbour. I have little to notice concerning her beyond what is said in the poem. She was a most striking instance how far a woman may surpass in talent, in knowledge, and culture of mind, those with and among whom she lives, and yet fall below them in Christian virtues of the heart and spirit. It seemed almost, and I say it with grief, that in proportion as she excelled in the one, she failed in the other. How frequently has one to observe in both sexes the same thing, and how mortifying is the reflection !

“As, on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of March.”

The story that follows was told to Mrs Wordsworth and my sister, by the sister of this unhappy young woman. Every particular was exactly as I have related. The party was not known to me, though she lived at Hawkshead ; but it was after I left school. The clergyman who administered comfort to her in her distress I knew well. Her sister, who told the story, was the wife of a leading yeoman in the vale of Grasmere, and they were an affectionate pair, and greatly respected by every one who knew them. Neither lived to be old ; and their estate—which was, perhaps, the most considerable then in the vale, and was endeared to them by many remembrances of a salutary character, not easily understood or sympathised with by those who are born to great affluence—passed to their eldest son, according to the practice of these vales, who died soon after he came into possession. He was an amiable and promising youth, but was succeeded by an only brother, a good-natured man, who fell into habits of drinking, by which he gradually reduced his property ; and the other day the last acre of it was sold, and his wife and children, and he himself still surviving, have very little left to live upon ; which it would not, perhaps, have been worth while to record here, but that

through all trials this woman has proved a model of patience, meekness, affectionate forbearance, and forgiveness. Their eldest son, who through the vices of his father has thus been robbed of an ancient family inheritance, was never heard to murmur or complain against the cause of their distress, and is now (1843) deservedly, the chief prop of his mother's hopes.

The Clergyman and his family described at the beginning of the seventh book were, during many years, our principal associates in the vale of Grasmere, unless I were to except our very nearest neighbours. I have entered so particularly into the main points of their history, that I will barely testify in prose that—with the single exception of the particulars of their journey to Grasmere, which, however, was exactly copied from real life in another instance—the whole that I have said of them is as faithful to the truth as words can make it. There was much talent in the family, and the eldest son was distinguished for poetical talent, of which a specimen is given in my notes to the Sonnets to the Duddon. Once, when in our cottage at Town-End, I was talking with him about poetry, in the course of our conversation I presumed to find fault with the versification of Pope, of whom he was an enthusiastic admirer. He defended him with a warmth that indicated much irritation; nevertheless I would not abandon my point, and said, "In compass and variety of sound your own versification surpasses his." Never shall I forget the change in his countenance and tone of voice: the storm was laid in a moment; he no longer disputed my judgment, and I passed immediately in his mind, no doubt, for as great a critic as ever lived. I ought to add, he was a clergyman and a well-educated man, and his verbal memory was the most remarkable of any individual I have known, except a Mr Archer, an Irishman, who lived several years in this neighbourhood, and who in this faculty was a prodigy: he afterwards became deranged, and I fear continues so if alive.

Then follows the character of Robert Walker, for which see notes to the Duddon.

Next that of the *Deaf Man*, whose epitaph may be seen in the churchyard at the head of Hawes-Water, and whose qualities of mind and heart, and their benign influence in conjunction with his privation, I had from his relatives on the spot.

The *Blind Man*, next commemorated, was John Gough, of Kendal, a man known, far beyond his neighbourhood, for his talents and attainments in natural history and science.

Of the *Infants' Grave* next noticed, I will only say, it is an exact picture of what fell under my own observation; and all persons who are intimately acquainted with cottage life must often have observed like instances of the working of the domestic affections.

"A volley thrice repeated o'er the corse
Let down into the hollow of that grave."

This young volunteer bore the name of Dawson, and was younger

brother, if I am not mistaken, to the prodigal of whose character and fortunes an account is given towards the beginning of the preceding book. The father of the family I knew well; he was a man of literary education and considerable experience in society—much beyond what was common among the inhabitants of the Vale. He had lived a good while in the Highlands of Scotland as a manager of iron-works at Bunaw, and had acted as clerk to one of my predecessors in the office of Distributor of Stamps, when he used to travel round the country collecting and bringing home the money due to Government in gold, which it may be worth while to mention, for the sake of my friends, was deposited in the cell or iron closet under the west window, which still exists, with the iron doors that guarded the property. This, of course, was before the time of Bills and Notes. The two sons of this person had no doubt been led by the knowledge of their father to take more delight in scholarship, and had been accustomed, in their own minds, to take a wider view of social interests, than was usual among their associates. The premature death of this gallant young man was much lamented, and as an attendant upon the funeral, I myself witnessed the ceremony, and the effect of it as described in the poems.

“Tradition tells
That, in Eliza’s golden days, a Knight
Came on a war-horse.”

“The house is gone.”

The pillars of the gateway in front of the mansion remained when we first took up our abode at Grasmere. Two or three cottages still remain which are called Nott Houses, from the name of the gentleman (I have called him a knight) concerning whom these traditions survive. He was the ancestor of the Knott family, formerly considerable proprietors in the district. What follows in the discourse of the Wanderer, upon the changes he had witnessed in rural life by the introduction of machinery, is truly described from what I myself saw during my boyhood and early youth, and from what was often told me by persons of this humble calling. Happily, most happily, for these mountains, the mischief was diverted from the banks of their beautiful streams, and transferred to open and flat counties abounding in coal, where the agency of steam was found much more effectual for carrying on those demoralising works. Had it not been for this invention, long before the present time, every torrent and river in this district would have had its factory, large and populous in proportion to the power of the water that could there be commanded. Parliament has interfered to prevent the night-work which was carried on in these mills as actively as during the day-time, and by necessity, still more perniciously; a sad disgrace to the proprietors and to the nation which could so long tolerate such unnatural proceedings.

Reviewing, at this late period, 1843, what I put into the mouths of my interlocutors a few years after the commencement of the century, I

grieve that so little progress has been made in diminishing the evils deplored, or promoting the benefits of education which the Wanderer anticipates. The results of Lord Ashley's labours to defer the time when children might legally be allowed to work in factories, and his endeavours to limit still further the hours of permitted labour, have fallen far short of his own humane wishes, and of those of every benevolent and right-minded man who has carefully attended to this subject; and in the present session of Parliament (1843) Sir James Graham's attempt to establish a course of religious education among the children employed in factories has been abandoned, in consequence of what might easily have been foreseen, the vehement and turbulent opposition of the Dissenters; so that for many years to come it may be thought expedient to leave the religious instruction of children entirely in the hands of the several denominations of Christians in the Island, each body to work according to its own means and in its own way. Such is my own confidence, a confidence I share with many others of my most valued friends, in the superior advantages, both religious and social, which attend a course of instruction presided over and guided by the clergy of the Church of England, that I have no doubt, that if but once its members, lay and clerical, were duly sensible of those benefits, their Church would daily gain ground, and rapidly, upon every shape and fashion of Dissent; and in that case, a great majority in Parliament being sensible of these benefits, the Ministers of the country might be emboldened, were it necessary, to apply funds of the State to the support of education on church principles. Before I conclude, I cannot forbear noticing the strenuous efforts made at this time in Parliament by so many persons to extend manufacturing and commercial industry at the expense of agricultural, though we have recently had abundant proofs that the apprehensions expressed by the Wanderer were not groundless.

"I spake of mischief by the wise diffused,
 With gladness thinking that the more it spreads
 The healthier, the securer, we become;
 Delusion which a moment may destroy!"

The Chartists are well aware of this possibility, and cling to it with an ardour and perseverance which nothing, but wiser and more brotherly dealing towards the many, on the part of the wealthy few, can moderate or remove.

"While, from the grassy mountain's open side
 We gazed, in silence hushed."

The point here fixed upon in my imagination is half way up the northern side of Loughrigg Fell, from which the Pastor and his companions are supposed to look upwards to the sky and mountain-tops, and round the vale, with the lake lying immediately beneath them.

“ But turned, not without welcome promise given
That he would share the pleasures and pursuits
Of yet another summer's day, consumed
In wandering with us.”

When I reported this promise of the Solitary, and long after, it was my wish, and I might say intention, that we should resume our wanderings and pass the Borders into his native country, where, as I hoped, he might witness, in the society of the Wanderer, some religious ceremony—a sacrament say, in the open fields, or a preaching among the mountains—which, by recalling to his mind the days of his early childhood, when he had been present on such occasions in company with his parents and nearest kindred, might have dissolved his heart into tenderness, and so done more towards restoring the Christian faith in which he had been educated, and, with that, contentedness and even cheerfulness of mind, than all that the Wanderer and Pastor by their several effusions and addresses had been able to effect. An issue like this was in my intentions. But alas !

————— “ mid the wreck of is and was,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o'er thought's optic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.”

RYDAL MOUNT, *June 24, 1843.*

St John Baptist Day.]

Although the Fenwick note to *The Excursion* has been printed here in full, extracts from it will be introduced as footnotes, in explanation of certain passages of the poem. *The Excursion* was written at intervals between 1795 and 1814. The story of Margaret, in the first book, was begun at Racedown, and continued at Alfoxden in 1797-8. But only two short fragments of the poem—the former in book first and the latter in book fourth (as indicated in the Fenwick note)—were written before Wordsworth's arrival at Grasmere. There the poem was thought out, arranged, written down, altered, and rearranged; the first part during his residence at Dove Cottage, the second and longer part at Allan Bank. The following extracts from Miss Wordsworth's Grasmere Journal shew how laboriously her brother worked at this poem :—

Tuesday, Dec. 22, 1801.— . . . “Went to Rydal for letters. The road was covered with snow. We walked home almost without speaking. William composed a few lines of the Pedlar. We talked about Lamb's tragedy.” . . .

Wednesday, Dec. 23.— . . . “Mary wrote out the Tales from Chaucer for Coleridge. William worked at the Ruined Cottage, and made himself very ill.” . . .

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 1802.— . . . “We sate till we were both tired,

for William wrote out part of his poem, and endeavoured to alter it, and so made himself ill. I copied out the rest for him." . . .

Monday, Feb. 1st.— . . . "William worked hard at the Pedlar, and tired himself." . . .

Tuesday, 2nd Feb.— . . . "William worked at the Pedlar." . . .

Thursday, 4th.— . . . "William thought a little about the Pedlar."

Friday, 5th.— . . . "Sate up late at the Pedlar."

Sunday, 7th.—"William had a bad night, and was working at his poem. We sate by the fire, and did not walk, but read the Pedlar, thinking it done; but lo! . . . could find fault with no one part of it—it was uninteresting, and must be altered. Poor William!"

Wednesday, 10th Feb.—"We read the first part of the poem, and were delighted with it, but William afterwards got to some ugly place, and went to bed tired out." . . .

Thursday, 11th.— . . . "William sadly tired, and working at the Pedlar."

Friday, 12th.— . . . "I re-copied the Pedlar; but poor William all the time at work. . . . We sate a long time with the window unclosed, and almost finished writing the Pedlar, but poor William wore himself out and me with labour. Went to bed at 12 o'clock."

Saturday, 13th.—"It snowed a little. Still at work at the Pedlar, altering and re-fitting. . . . William read parts of his *Recluse* aloud to me." . . .

Sunday, 14th Feb.— . . . "William left me at work altering some passages of the Pedlar, and went into the orchard."

Sunday, Feb. 28.— . . . "William very ill; employed himself with the Pedlar."

Friday morning.— . . . "I wrote the Pedlar, and finished it." . . .

These extracts—which will recall the laborious way in which he toiled over the poem *Michael* (see Vol. II. p. 144)—all refer to the close of the year 1801, and the beginning of the year 1802. It is impossible to find out, with exactness, what were the parts of *The Excursion* which were then so carefully written, and so fastidiously altered—since *The Pedlar* was the Wordsworth household name for the entire poem, until it was recast for publication, at Allan Bank. But after February 1802 he turned to other subjects of composition, chiefly lyrical, and laid aside *The Pedlar* for a time—his sister, at least, regarding it as "finished." What was completed, however, did not, probably, extend beyond the story of the Wanderer, and perhaps a part of that of the Solitary. The person, whose character gave rise to the Solitary, came to reside at Grasmere not long after the Wordsworths settled there; but as the Fenwick note expressly says that the poem was written "*chiefly* during our residence at Allan Bank," I do not think that more than the first two books belong to the Town-end period.

The Excursion was originally published in quarto in 1814. The

second edition, octavo, appeared in 1820.* It was included in all the collected editions of 1820, 1827, 1836, 1843, 1845, 1849-50, in the Paris reprint of 1828, and in the American editions by Henry Reed. It was also republished by itself in 1836, 1844, and 1847. The textual changes in the several editions were numerous and significant. The longest and most important passage in the earlier ones, omitted after 1820, occurs at the close of the sixth book. Another (shorter) fragment, near the beginning of book seventh, refers to the Sympson household at the Wytheburn parsonage. No edition of *The Excursion* has as yet been issued with adequate notes, either topographical or literary. The first book—"The Wanderer"—has, however, been annotated, both by Mr H. H. Turner (published in Rivington's English School Classics), and also by the Rev. H. G. Robinson, Prebendary of York, and published at Edinburgh by Messrs Oliver & Boyd.

In the Notes to the text I have confined myself chiefly to the explanation of obscure allusions, topographical, historical, or legendary; and have reserved the discussion of Wordsworth's teaching in *The Excursion*, his views of Man and Nature, of human character and destiny, as well as a comparison of the teaching of *The Prelude* with that of *The Excursion*, and the meaning he attached to such phrases as "imaginative will," for the Critical Essay in the last volume of this work.—Ed.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM, EARL OF
LONSDALE, K.G., Etc., Etc.

OFT, through thy fair domains,† illustrious Peer!
In youth I roamed, on youthful pleasures bent;
And mused in rocky cell or sylvan tent,
Beside swift-flowing Lowther's current clear,‡
—Now, by thy care befriended, I appear
Before thee, LONSDALE, and this Work present,
A token (may it prove a monument!)
Of high respect and gratitude sincere.

* See Appendix, Note B.—Ed.

† The grounds of Lowther Castle. Compare the sonnet beginning—

"Lowther! in thy majestic Pile are seen."

—Ed.

‡ The Lowther stream, rising amongst the Shap Fells, joins the Eamont at Brougham Castle.—Ed.

Gladly would I have waited till my task
 Had reached its close ; but Life is insecure,
 And Hope full oft fallacious as a dream :
 Therefore, for what is here produced, I ask
 Thy favour ; trusting that thou wilt not deem
 The offering, though imperfect, premature.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
July 29, 1814.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1814.

THE Title-page announces that this is only a portion of a poem; and the Reader must be here apprised that it belongs to the second part of a long and laborious Work, which is to consist of three parts.—The Author will candidly acknowledge that, if the first of these had been completed, and in such a manner as to satisfy his own mind, he should have preferred the natural order of publication, and have given that to the world first; but, as the second division of the Work was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things, than the others were meant to do, more continuous exertion was naturally bestowed upon it, and greater progress made here than in the rest of the poem; and as this part does not depend upon the preceding, to a degree which will materially injure its own peculiar interest, the Author, complying with the earnest entreaties of some valued Friends, presents the following pages to the Public.

It may be proper to state whence the poem, of which The Excursion is a part, derives its Title of THE RECLUSE.—Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how

far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work,* addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled, *The Recluse*; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.—The preparatory poem* is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the antechapel has to the body of a gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged,† will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.

The Author would not have deemed himself justified in saying, upon this occasion, so much of performances either unfinished, or unpublished, if he had not thought that the labour bestowed by him upon what he has heretofore and now laid before the Public, entitled him to candid attention for such a statement as he thinks necessary to throw light

* *The Prelude*.—Ed.

† As they were—according to their Author's somewhat arbitrary classification—in the editions of 1815, and subsequent years.—Ed.

upon his endeavours to please and, he would hope, to benefit his countrymen.—Nothing further need be added, than that the first and third parts of *The Recluse* will consist chiefly of meditations in the Author's own person; and that in the intermediate part (*The Excursion*) the intervention of characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted.

It is not the Author's intention formally to announce a system: it was more animating to him to proceed in a different course; and if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings, the Reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself. And in the mean time the following passage, taken from the conclusion of the first book of *The Recluse*, may be acceptable as a kind of *Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole Poem.

‘ On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight
Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
The good and evil of our mortal state.
—To these emotions, whencesoe’er they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself—
I would give utterance in numerous verse.
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
Of blessed consolations in distress;
Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;

Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
 Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
 Inviolatè retirement, subject there
 To Conscience only, and the law supreme
 Of that Intelligence which governs all—
 I sing :—‘ fit audience let me find though few !’

So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard—
 In holiest mood.¹ Urania,* I shall need
 Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
 Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven !
 For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
 Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
 To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
 All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
 That ever was put forth in personal form—
 Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
 Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—
 I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
 The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
 Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
 By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
 As fall upon us often when we look
 Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man—
 My haunt, and the main region of my song.
 —Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
 Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
 Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
 From earth’s materials—waits upon my steps ;

¹ 1849.

Holiest of men.

1814.

* “ One of the Muses, daughter of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Hesiod, *Theog.*, 78 ; Ovid, *Fast.* v. 55). She was regarded as the Muse of Astronomy, and was represented with a celestial globe, to which she points with a little staff” (Hirt., *Mythol. Bilderb.* p. 210).—Ed.

Pitches her tents before me as I move,
 An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
 Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
 Sought in the Atlantic Main*—why should they be
 A history only of departed things,
 Or a mere fiction of what never was?
 For the discerning intellect of Man,
 When wedded to this goodly universe
 In love and holy passion, shall find these
 A simple produce of the common day.
 —I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
 Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
 Of this great consummation:—and, by words
 Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
 Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
 Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
 To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
 How exquisitely the individual Mind
 (And the progressive powers perhaps no less
 Of the whole species) to the external World
 Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too—
 Theme this but little heard of among men—
 The external World is fitted to the Mind;
 And the creation (by no lower name
 Can it be called) which they with blended might
 Accomplish:—this is our high argument.
 —Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
 Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
 And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
 Of madding passions mutually inflamed;
 Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
 Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang

* Compare *The Prelude*, Vol. III. p. 136, notes * and †; Strabo, 1; Pliny, 6, c. 31 and 32; Horace, *Odes* IV., 8, v. 27; Plutarch, *Sertorius*.—Ed.

Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
 Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
 Within the walls of cities—may these sounds
 Have their authentic comment; that even these
 Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn!—
 Descend, prophetic Spirit!¹ that inspir'st
 The human Soul of universal earth,
 Dreaming on things to come;* and dost possess
 A metropolitan temple in the hearts
 Of mighty Poets: upon me bestow
 A gift of genuine insight; that my Song
 With star-like virtue in its place may shine,
 Shedding benignant influence, and secure,
 Itself, from all malevolent effect
 Of those mutations that extend their sway
 Throughout the nether sphere!—And if with this
 I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
 Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
 Contemplating; and who, and what he was—
 The transitory Being that beheld
 This Vision; when and where, and how he lived;
 Be not this labour useless. If such theme
 May sort with highest objects, then—dread Power!
 Whose gracious favour is the primal source
 Of all illumination—may my Life
 Express the image of a better time,
 More wise desires, and simpler manners:—nurse
 My Heart in genuine freedom:—all pure thoughts
 Be with me;—so shall thy unfailing love
 Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!"

¹ 1827.

Come thou prophetic Spirit!

1814.

Book First.

THE WANDERER.

ARGUMENT.

A summer forenoon—The Author reaches a ruined Cottage upon a Common, and there meets with a revered Friend, the Wanderer, of whose education and course of life he gives an account¹—The Wanderer, while resting under the shade of the Trees that surround the Cottage, relates the History of its last Inhabitant.

'Twas summer, and the sun had mounted high :
 Southward the landscape indistinctly glared
 Through a pale steam ;* but all the northern downs,
 In clearest air ascending, showed far off
 A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung
 From brooding clouds ; shadows that lay in spots ²
 Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
 Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed ;
 To him most pleasant who on soft cool moss ³
 Extends his careless limbs along the front
 Of some huge cave, whose rocky ceiling casts
 A twilight of its own,† an ample shade,
 Where the wren warbles, while the dreaming man,
 Half-conscious of the soothing melody,

¹ 1836.

the Wanderer, of whom he gives an account— 1814.

² 1827.

. flung
From many a brooding cloud ; far as the sight
Could reach, these many shadows lay in spots 1814.

³ 1849.

Pleasant to him who on the soft cool moss 1814.

* Compare the *Evening Walk* (Vol I. p. 7)—

“When, in the south, the wan moon, brooding still,
 Breathed a pale steam around the glaring hill.” —Ed.

Compare the *Evening Walk* (Vol. I. p. 8)—

“And its own twilight softens the whole scene.” —Ed.

With side-long eye looks out upon the scene,*
 By power of that impending covert, thrown
 To finer distance. Mine was at that hour
 Far other lot, yet with good hope that soon
 Under a shade as grateful I should find
 Rest, and be welcomed there to livelier joy.¹
 Across a bare wide Common I was toiling
 With languid steps that by the slippery turf²
 Were baffled; nor could my weak arm disperse
 The host of insects gathering round my face,
 And ever with me as I paced along.³

¹ 1849.

By that impending covert made more soft,
 More low and distant! Other lot was mine;
 Yet with good hope that soon I should obtain
 As grateful resting-place, and livelier joy. 1814.

By power of that impending covert thrown,
 To finer distance. Other lot was mine;
 Yet with good heart that soon I should obtain 1827.
 Yet with good hope 1832.

A toilsome lot, yet with good hope that soon
 Under a shade as grateful I should find
 Rest, &c., C.

Though with good hope to cheer the sultry hour
 That under shade as grateful I should soon
 Rest, and be welcomed there to livelier joy. C.

² 1849.

With languid feet, which by the slippery ground 1814.

With languid steps that 1827.

3

Across a bare wide common I was toiling
 When oft each footstep by the slippery turf
 Was baffled: nor could my arm disperse
 The host of insects gathered round my face,
 And ever with me as I paced along.
 Now with eyes turned towards the far-distant hills,
 Now towards a grove that from the wide-spread moor
 Rose up! the port to which my course was bound. C.

* Compare the Sonnet composed in early boyhood (Vol. IV. p. 23).
 —Ed.

Upon that open moorland stood a grove,
 The wished-for port to which my course was bound.¹
 Thither I came, and there, amid the gloom
 Spread by a brotherhood of lofty elms,*
 Appeared a roofless Hut; four naked walls
 That stared upon each other!—I looked round,
 And to my wish and to my hope espied
 The Friend I sought;² a Man of reverend age,
 But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired.
 There was he seen upon the cottage-bench,
 Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep;
 An iron-pointed staff lay at his side.

Him had I marked the day before—alone
 And stationed in the public way, with face
 Turned toward the sun then setting, while that staff
 Afforded, to the figure of the man³
 Detained for contemplation or repose,
 Graceful support; his countenance as he stood

¹ 1849.

Upon that open level stood a Grove,
 The wished-for Port to which my steps were bound. 1814.
 my course was bound. 1827.

² 1849.

Him whom I sought; 1814.

³ 1827.

And in the middle of the public way
 Stationed, as if to rest himself, with face
 Turned tow'rds the sun then setting, while that staff
 Afforded to his Figure, as he stood, 1814.
 Him had I chanced to mark the day before
 Alone, and stationed in the public way;
 Westward he looked as if his gaze were fixed
 Upon the sun then setting C.

* Compare the *Sonnet composed at Neidpath Castle*—

“A brotherhood of venerable Trees.”

Was hidden from my view, and he remained ¹
 Unrecognised; but, stricken by the sight,
 With slackened footsteps I advanced, and soon
 A glad congratulation we exchanged
 At such unthought-of meeting.—For the night
 We parted, nothing willingly; and now
 He by appointment waited for me here,
 Under the covert² of these clustering elms.

We were tried Friends; amid a pleasant vale,
 In the antique market-village where was passed
 My school-time,* an apartment he had owned,
 To which at intervals the Wanderer drew,³
 And found a kind of home or harbour there.
 He loved me; from a swarm of rosy boys
 Singled out me, as he in sport would say,
 For my grave looks, too thoughtful for my years.

¹ 1849.

.	the countenance of the Man	
Was hidden from my view, and he himself		1814.
.	his countenance meanwhile	
Was hidden from my view, and he remained		1827.

² C. and 1849.

Beneath the shelter	1814.
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³ 1849.

We were tried Friends: I from my Childhood up	
Had known him.—In a little Town obscure,	
A market-village, seated in a tract	
Of mountains, where my school-day time was pass'd,	
One room he owned, the fifth part of a house,	
A place to which he drew, from time to time,	1814.
.	where were passed
My school-days,	1827.

* Hawkshead. See the notes to *The Prelude*, Books I. and II. The Fenwick note tells us, "At Hawkshead, while I was a school-boy, there occasionally resided a packman, with whom I had frequent conversations upon what had befallen him, and what he had observed during his wandering life, and, as was natural, we took much to each other."—ED.

As I grew up, it was my best delight
 To be his chosen comrade. Many a time,
 On holidays, we rambled through the woods :
 We sate—we walked ; he pleased me with report ¹
 Of things which he had seen ; and often touched
 Abstrusest matter, reasonings of the mind
 Turned inward ; or at my request would sing ²
 Old songs, the product of his native hills ;³
 A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,
 Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed
 As cool refreshing water, by the care
 Of the industrious husbandman, diffused
 Through a parched meadow-ground, in time of drought.
 Still deeper welcome found his pure discourse ;
 How precious when in riper days I learned
 To weigh with care his words, and to rejoice
 In the plain presence of his dignity !

Oh ! many are the Poets that are sown
 By Nature ; men endowed with highest gifts,
 The vision and the faculty divine ;*
 Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse,
 (Which, in the docile season of their youth,
 It was denied them to acquire, through lack
 Of culture and the inspiring aid of books,

¹ 1827.

. , we wandered through the woods,
 A pair of random travellers ; we sate—
 We walked ; he pleased me with his sweet discourse 1814.

² 1827.

. he sang 1814.

3

Old songs brought with him from his native hills. c.

* Compare the *Stanzas suggested by a picture of Peele Castle in a Storm*—

“The consecration, and the Poet’s dream,”

and the discourse on Poetry in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (Vol. IV. p. 275).—ED.

Or haply by a temper too severe,
 Or a nice backwardness afraid of shame)
 Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led
 By circumstance to take unto the height
 The measure of themselves, these favoured Beings,
 All but a scattered few, live out their time,
 Husbanding that which they possess within,
 And go to the grave, unthought of. Strongest minds
 Are often those of whom the noisy world
 Hears least; * else surely this Man had not left †
 His graces unrevealed and unproclaimed.
 But, as the mind was filled with inward light, ‡
 So not without distinction had he lived,
 Beloved and honoured—far as he was known.
 And some small portion of his eloquent speech,
 And something that may serve to set in view
 The feeling pleasures of his loneliness,
 His observations, and the thoughts his mind ¹
 Had dealt with—I will here record in verse;
 Which, if with truth it correspond, and sink
 Or rise as venerable Nature leads,
 The high and tender Muses shall accept
 With gracious smile, deliberately pleased,
 And listening Time reward with sacred praise.

Among the hills of Athol he was born;

¹ 1827.

The doings, observations, which his mind

1814.

* "The world knows nothing of its greatest men."

Sir Henry Taylor, *Philip van Artevelde*,
 Act i. Scene 5.—ED.

† "Nec vixit male qui natus moriensque fefellit."

—Hor. Ep. i. 17, 10.—ED.

‡ "The light that never was, on sea or land."

—Peele *Castle*.—ED.

Where,¹ on a small hereditary farm,
 An unproductive slip of rugged ground,
 His Parents, with their numerous offspring, dwelt;²
 A virtuous household, though exceeding poor!
 Pure livers were they all, austere and grave,
 And fearing God;* the very children taught
 Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's word,
 And an habitual piety, maintained
 With strictness scarcely known on English ground.

From his sixth year, the Boy of whom I speak,
 In summer, tended cattle on the hills;
 But, through the inclement and the perilous days
 Of long-continuing winter, he repaired,
 Equipped with satchel, to a school, that stood³
 Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge,
 Remote from view⁴ of city spire, or sound

¹ 1827.

There, 1814.

² 1827.

His Father dwelt; and died in poverty;
 While He, whose lowly fortune I retrace,
 The youngest of three sons, was yet a babe,
 A little one—unconscious of their loss.
 But ere he had outgrown his infant days
 His widowed Mother, for a second Mate
 Espoused the Teacher of a Village School;
 Who on her offspring zealously bestowed
 Needful instruction; not alone in arts
 Which to his humble duties appertained,
 But in the lore of right and wrong, the rule
 Of human kindness, in the peaceful ways
 Of honesty, and holiness severe. 1814.

³ 1827.

To his Step-father's school, that stood alone, 1814.

⁴ 1827.

Far from the sight 1814.

* Compare *The Leech-Gatherer*, Vol. II. p. 279—

“Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
 Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.”

Of minster clock! From that bleak tenement
 He, many an evening, to his distant home
 In solitude returning, saw the hills
 Grow larger in the darkness; all alone
 Beheld the stars come out above his head,
 And travelled through the wood, with no one near
 To whom he might confess the things he saw.

So the foundations of his mind were laid,
 In such communion, not from terror free,*
 While yet a child, and long before his time,
 Had he¹ perceived the presence and the power
 Of greatness; and deep feelings had impressed
 So vividly great objects that they lay
 Upon his mind like substances, whose presence
 Perplexed the bodily sense. He had received
 A precious gift;² for, as he grew in years,

¹ 1836.

He had 1814.

² 1849.

Great objects on his mind, with portraiture
 And colour so distinct, that on his mind
 They lay like substances, and almost seemed
 To haunt the bodily sense. He had received
 (Vigorous in native genius as he was)

A precious gift; 1814.

. He had received

A precious gift; 1827.

. Had impressed

Upon his mind great objects so distinct
 In portraiture, in colouring so vivid,
 That on his mind they lay like substances,
 And almost indistinguishably mixed
 With things of bodily sense.

C.

*

“From a boy

I wantoned with thy breakers—they to me
 Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
 Made them a terror,—’t was a pleasing fear.”

—BYRON, *Childe Harold*, Canto IV., St. clxxxiv.

—ED.

With these impressions would he still compare
 All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and forms ;
 And, being still unsatisfied with aught
 Of dimmer character, he thence attained
 An active power to fasten images
 Upon his brain ; and on their pictured lines
 Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
 The liveliness of dreams.* Nor did he fail,
 While yet a child, with a child's eagerness
 Incessantly to turn his ear and eye
 On all things which the moving seasons brought
 To feed such appetite—nor this alone
 Appeased his yearning :—in the after-day
 Of boyhood, many an hour in caves forlorn,
 And 'mid the hollow depths of naked crags
 He sate, and even in their fixed lineaments,
 Or from the power of a peculiar eye,
 Or by creative feeling overborne,
 Or by predominance of thought oppressed,
 Even in their fixed and steady lineaments
 He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind,
 Expression ever varying !

Thus informed,
 He had small need of books ; for many a tale
 Traditionary, round the mountains hung,
 And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,
 Nourished Imagination in her growth,
 And gave the Mind that apprehensive power

* Compare—

“those obstinate questionings
 Of sense, and outward things,” &c.

—*The Ode on Immortality* (Vol. IV. p. 53).

“What I saw
 Appeared like something in myself, a dream,
 A prospect of the mind.”

—*The Prelude*, Book II. (Vol. III. p. 167).—Ed.

By which she is made quick to recognise
 The moral properties and scope of things.
 But eagerly he read, and read again,
 Whate'er the minister's old shelf supplied ;
 The life and death of martyrs, who sustained,
 With will inflexible, those fearful pangs
 Triumphantly displayed in records left
 Of persecution, and the Covenant—times
 Whose echo rings through Scotland to this hour !
 And there, by lucky hap, had been preserved
 A straggling volume, torn and incomplete,
 That left half-told* the preternatural tale,
 Romance of giants, chronicle of fiends,
 Profuse in garniture of wooden cuts
 Strange and uncouth ; dire faces, figures dire,
 Sharp-kneed, sharp-elbowed, and lean-ankled too,
 With long and ghostly shanks—forms which once seen
 Could never be forgotten !

In his heart,
 Where Fear sate thus, a cherished visitant,
 Was wanting yet the pure delight of love
 By sound diffused, or by the breathing air,†
 Or by the silent looks of happy things,‡

* Compare—

“Or call up him who left half told
 The story of Cambuscan bold.”

—MILTON, *Il Penseroso*, l. 109.

† Compare—

“And 'tis my faith that every flower
 Enjoys the air it breathes.”

—*Lines Written in Early Spring* (Vol. I. p. 233.)

—ED.

‡ Compare—

“Communing
 With every form of creature as it looked
 Towards the Uncreated, with a countenance
 Of adoration, with an eye of love.”

—*The Prelude*, Book II. (Vol. III. p. 167).—ED.

Or flowing from the universal face
 Of earth and sky. But he had felt the power
 Of Nature, and already was prepared,
 By his intense conceptions, to receive
 Deeply the lesson deep of love which he,
 Whom Nature, by whatever means, has taught
 To feel intensely, cannot but receive.

Such was the Boy—but for the growing Youth
 What soul was his, when, from the naked top
 Of some bold headland,¹ he beheld the sun
 Rise up, and bathe the world in light!* He looked—
 Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
 And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
 Beneath him†:—Far and wide the clouds were touched,
 And in their silent faces could he read²

¹ 1827.

From early childhood, even, as hath been said,
 From his sixth year, he had been sent abroad
 In summer to tend herds: such was his task
 Thenceforward 'till the later day of youth.
 O then what soul was his, when, on the tops
 Of the high mountains,

1814.

² 1849.

., beneath him lay
 In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touched,
 And in their silent faces did he read
 could he read

1814.

1836.

* Compare Book IV. p. 150; also—

“And washed by the morning water-gold
 Florence lay out on the mountain-side.”

ROBERT BROWNING: *Old Pictures in Florence*, St. 1.
 —ED.

† The sea is not visible from the hills of Athole, except from the summit of Ben y' Gloe, where it can be seen to the south-east in the clearest weather. Wordsworth did not care for local accuracy in this passage. It was quite unnecessary for his purpose. Compare his account of the morning walk near Hawkshead in *The Prelude*, Vol. III. p. 202, and see the appendix-note to that volume, p. 413, &c.—ED.

Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
 Nor any voice of joy ;* his spirit drank
 The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form,
 All melted into him ; they swallowed up
 His animal being ; in them did he live,
 And by them did he live ; they were his life.
 In such access of mind, in such high hour
 Of visitation from the living God,
 Thought was not ; in enjoyment it expired.
 No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request ;
 Rapt into still communion that transcends
 The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
 His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
 That made him ; it was blessedness and love !

A Herdsman on the lonely mountain tops,
 Such intercourse was his, and in this sort
 Was his existence oftentimes *possessed*.
 O then how beautiful, how bright, appeared
 The written promise ! Early had he learned ¹
 To reverence the volume that displays ²
 The mystery, the life which cannot die ;
 But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith.
 All things, responsive to the writing, there ³

¹ 1827.

.	He had early learned	1814.
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² 1827.

.	which displays	1814.
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³ 1832.

.	There did he see the writing ;—all things there	1814.
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.	Responsive to the writing, all things there	1827.
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* Compare *Tintern Abbey*, in which he speaks of the Rock, the Mountain, and the Wood, their colours and their forms, as an appetite, a feeling, and joy,

“ That had no need of a remoter charm
 By thought supplied, nor any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye.”

See Vol. I. p. 269.—ED.

Breathed immortality, revolving life,
 And greatness still revolving ; infinite :
 There littleness was not ; the least of things
 Seemed infinite ; and there his spirit shaped
 Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he *saw*.
 What wonder if his being thus became
 Sublime and comprehensive ! Low desires,
 Low thoughts had there no place ; yet was his heart
 Lowly ; for he was meek in gratitude,
 Oft as he called those ecstasies to mind,
 And whence they flowed ; and from them he acquired
 Wisdom, which works thro' patience ; thence he learned
 In oft-recurring hours of sober thought ¹
 To look on Nature with a humble heart,
 Self-questioned where it did not understand,
 And with a superstitious eye of love.

So passed the time ; yet to the nearest town ²
 He duly went with what small overplus
 His earnings might supply, and brought away
 The book that ³ most had tempted his desires
 While at the stall he read. Among the hills
 He gazed upon that mighty orb of song,
 The divine Milton.* Lore of different kind,
 The annual savings of a toilsome life,

¹ 1827.

In many a calmer hour of sober thought 1814.

² 1827.

. . . yet to a neighbouring town 1814.

³ 1827.

The Book which 1814.

* Compare the line in the sonnet on Milton—

“Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart.”

Vol. II. pp. 301-2.—Ed.

His School-master supplied ;¹ books that explain
 The purer elements of truth involved
 In lines and numbers, and, by charm severe,
 (Especially perceived where nature droops
 And feeling is suppressed) preserve the mind
 Busy in solitude and poverty.
 These occupations oftentimes deceived
 The listless hours, while in the hollow vale,
 Hollow and green, he lay on the green turf
 In pensive idleness. What could he do,
 Thus daily thirsting, in that lonesome life,
 With blind endeavours ?² Yet, still uppermost,
 Nature was at his heart as if he felt,
 Though yet he knew not how, a wasting power
 In all things that³ from her sweet influence
 Might tend to wean him. Therefore with her hues,
 Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
 He clothed the nakedness of austere truth.
 While yet he lingered in the rudiments
 Of science, and among her simplest laws,
 His triangles—they were the stars of heaven,
 The silent stars ! Oft did he take delight
 To measure the altitude⁴ of some tall crag
 That⁵ is the eagle's birth-place, or some peak

¹ 1827.

His Step-father supplied ; . . . 1814.

² 1827.

. What could he do
 With blind endeavours ; in that lonesome life,
 Thus thirsting daily ? 1814.

³ 1827.

In all things which 1814.

⁴ 1827.

To measure th' altitude 1814.

⁵ 1827.

Which 1814.

Familiar with forgotten years, that shows
 Inscribed upon its visionary sides,¹
 The history of many a winter storm,
 Or obscure records of the path of fire.*

And thus before his eighteenth year was told,
 Accumulated feelings pressed his heart
 With still increasing weight;² he was o'erpowered
 By Nature; by the turbulence subdued
 Of his own mind; by mystery and hope,
 And the first virgin passion of a soul
 Communing with the glorious universe.†
 Full often wished he that the winds might rage
 When they were silent: far more fondly now
 Than in his earlier season did he love
 Tempestuous nights—the conflict and the sounds

¹ 1849.

. that shews
 Inscribed, as with the silence of the thought,
 Upon its bleak and visionary sides,

1814.

² 1827.

With an increasing weight;

1814.

* In this description of the eagle's birth-place, and the peak "familiar with forgotten years," Wordsworth probably wandered in imagination from the Athole district to Westmoreland, as this part of the poem was in all likelihood written in 1801-2. He visited the Athole country, with his sister, in 1803; going up as far as Blair, and returning: but there is no peak in that district (at least none that he would see) that shows

"Inscribed upon its visionary sides
 The history of many a winter storm,
 Or obscure records of the path of fire,"

as, for example, the Stob Dearg in the Buchaille Etive Mor group in Argyll does, a peak which he saw in the course of his Scottish tour in that year.
 —Ed.

† Compare

. "The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me
 An appetite,"

—*Tintern Abbey*, Vol. I. p. 268. —Ed.

That live in darkness. From his intellect
 And from the stillness of abstracted thought
 He asked repose; and, failing oft to win
 The peace required,¹ he scanned the laws of light
 Amid the roar of torrents, where they send
 From hollow clefts up to the clearer air
 A cloud of mist, that smitten by the sun
 Varies its rainbow hues.² But vainly thus,
 And vainly by all other means, he strove
 To mitigate the fever of his heart.

In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
 Thus was he reared; much wanting to assist
 The growth of intellect, yet gaining more,³
 And every moral feeling of his soul
 Strengthened and braced, by breathing in content
 The keen, the wholesome, air of poverty,
 And drinking from the well of homely life.
 —But, from past liberty, and tried restraints,
 He now was summoned to select the course
 Of humble industry that promised best⁴
 To yield him no unworthy maintenance.
 Urged by his Mother, he essayed to teach

¹ 1827.

. . . ; and I have heard him say
 That often, failing at this time to gain
 The peace required, 1814.

² 1827.

. . . , which in the sunshine frames
 A lasting tablet—for the observer's eye
 Varying its rainbow hues. 1814.

³ 1827.

Thus, even from Childhood upward, was he reared;
 For intellectual progress wanting much,
 Doubtless, of needful help—yet gaining more; 1814.

⁴ 1827.

. which promised best 1814.

A village-school—but wandering thoughts were then
 A misery to him ; and the Youth resigned ¹
 A task he was unable to perform.

That stern yet kindly Spirit,* who constrains
 The Savoyard to quit his naked rocks,
 The free-born Swiss to leave his narrow vales,
 (Spirit attached to regions mountainous
 Like their own stedfast clouds) did now impel
 His restless mind to look abroad with hope.
 —An irksome drudgery seems it to plod on,
 Through hot and dusty ways, or pelting storm,
 A vagrant Merchant under a heavy load,
 Bent as he moves, and needing frequent rest ; ²
 Yet do such travellers find their own delight ;
 And their hard service, deemed debasing now,
 Gained merited respect in simpler times ;
 When squire, and priest, and they who round them dwelt
 In rustic sequestration—all dependent
 Upon the PEDLAR's toil—supplied their wants,
 Or pleased their fancies, with the wares he brought.

¹ 1827.

The Mother strove to make her Son perceive
 With what advantage he might teach a School
 In the adjoining Village ; but the Youth,
 Who of this service made a short essay,
 Found that the wanderings of his thought were then
 A misery to him ; that he must resign

1814

² 1836.

Through dusty ways, in storm, from door to door,
 A vagrant Merchant bent beneath his load !
 Through hot and dusty ways, or pelting storm,

1814.

1827.

* Enterprise. Compare the poem *To Enterprise*, in Vol. VI., which, Wordsworth says, “arose out of the *Italian Itinerant and the Swiss Goatherd*.” Compare also the latter poem, No. XXIII. of the *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent*, 1820.—ED.

Not ignorant was the Youth that still no few
 Of his adventurous countrymen were led
 By perseverance in this track of life
 To competence and ease:—to him it offered ¹
 Attractions manifold;—and this he chose.
 —His Parents on the enterprise bestowed ²
 Their farewell benediction, but with hearts
 Foreboding evil. From his native hills
 He wandered far; much did he see of men,*
 Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,
 Their passions and their feelings; chiefly those
 Essential and eternal in the heart,
 That,³ 'mid the simpler forms of rural life,
 Exist more simple in their elements,
 And speak a plainer language.† In the woods,
 A lone Enthusiast, and among the fields,
 Itinerant in this labour, he had passed
 The better portion of his time; and there
 Spontaneously had his affections thriven
 Amid the bounties of the year, the peace
 And liberty of nature;⁴ there he kept
 In solitude and solitary thought
 His mind in a just equipoise of love.

¹ 1849.

. ;—for him it bore 1814.

² 1827.

He asked his Mother's blessing; and, with tears
 Thanking his second Father, asked from him
 Paternal blessings. The good Pair bestowed 1814.

³ 1827.

Which 1814.

⁴ 1827.

Upon the bounties of the year, and felt
 The liberty of Nature; 1814.

* See Wordsworth's note, p. 395.

† Compare the Preface to Lyrical Ballads, 1800, Vol. IV. p. 278-9.—ED.

Serene it was, unclouded by the cares
 Of ordinary life ; unvexed, unwarped
 By partial bondage. In his steady course,
 No piteous revolutions had he felt,
 No wild varieties of joy and grief.
 Unoccupied by sorrow of its own,
 His heart lay open ; and, by nature tuned
 And constant disposition of his thoughts
 To sympathy with man, he was alive
 To all that was enjoyed where'er he went,
 And all that was endured ; for, in himself
 Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
 He had no painful pressure from without
 That made him turn aside from wretchedness
 With coward fears. He could *afford* to suffer
 With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came
 That in our best experience he was rich,
 And in the wisdom of our daily life.
 For hence, minutely, in his various rounds,
 He had observed the progress and decay
 Of many minds, of minds and bodies too ;
 The history of many families ;
 How they had prospered ; how they were o'erthrown
 By passion or mischance, or such misrule
 Among the unthinking masters of the earth
 As makes the nations groan.

This active course

He followed till provision for his wants
 Had been obtained ;—the Wanderer then resolved ¹
 To pass the remnant of his days, untasked

¹ 1827.

. —This active course,
 Chosen in youth, through manhood he pursued,
 Till due provision for his modest wants
 Had been obtained ;—and, thereupon, resolved

With needless services, from hardship free.
 His calling laid aside, he lived at ease :
 But still he loved to pace the public roads
 And the wild paths ; and, by the summer's warmth
 Invited, often would he leave his home
 And journey far, revisiting the scenes
 That to his memory were most endeared.¹
 —Vigorous in health, of hopeful spirits, undamped²
 By worldly-mindedness or anxious care ;
 Observant, studious, thoughtful, and refreshed
 By knowledge gathered up from day to day ;
 Thus had he lived a long and innocent life.

The Scottish Church, both on himself and those
 With whom from childhood he grew up, had 'held
 The strong hand of her purity ; and still
 Had watched him with an unrelenting eye.
 This he remembered in his riper age
 With gratitude, and reverential thoughts.
 But by the native vigour of his mind,
 By his habitual wanderings out of doors,
 By loneliness, and goodness, and kind works,
 Whate'er, in docile childhood or in youth,
 He had imbibed of fear or darker thought
 Was melted all away ; so true was this,
 That sometimes his religion seemed to me
 Self-taught, as of a dreamer in the woods ;
 Who to the model of his own pure heart

¹ 1827.

. . . ; and, when the summer's warmth
 Invited him, would often leave his home
 And journey far, revisiting those scenes
 Which to his memory were most endeared.

1814.

² 1827.

. , untouched

1814.

Shaped his belief,¹ as grace divine inspired,
 And human reason² dictated with awe.
 —And surely never did there live on earth
 A man of kindlier nature. The rough sports
 And teasing ways of children vexed not him;
 Indulgent listener³ was he to the tongue
 Of garrulous age; nor did the sick man's tale,
 To his fraternal sympathy addressed,
 Obtain reluctant hearing.

Plain his garb;
 Such as might suit a rustic Sire, prepared
 For Sabbath duties; yet he was a man
 Whom no one could have passed without remark.
 Active and nervous was his gait; his limbs
 And his whole figure breathed intelligence.
 Time had compressed the freshness of his cheek
 Into a narrower circle of deep red,
 But had not tamed his eye;* that, under brows
 Shaggy and gray, had meanings which it brought
 From years of youth;† which, like a Being made

¹ 1827.

Framed his belief, 1814.

² 1836.

Or human reason 1814.

³ 1827.

Nor could he bid them from his presence, tired
 With questions and importunate demands:
 Indulgent listener 1814.

* Compare *Simon Lee*—

“Full five-and-thirty years he lived
 A running huntsman merry;
 And still the centre of his cheek
 Is red as a ripe cherry.”

—Vol. I. p. 227.

Also the description of Margaret, p. 57 of this volume.—ED.

† Compare the *Leech Gatherer*, st. xiii.—ED.

Of many Beings, he had wondrous skill
To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.

So was He framed; and such his course of life,
Who now, with no appendage but a staff,
The prized memorial of relinquished toils,
Upon that cottage-bench reposed his limbs,
Screened from the sun. Supine the Wanderer lay,
His eyes as if in drowsiness half shut,
The shadows of the breezy elms above
Dappling his face. He had not heard the sound
Of my approaching steps, and in the shade
Unnoticed did I stand some minutes' space.¹
At length I hailed him, seeing that his hat
Was moist with water-drops, as if the brim
Had newly scooped a running stream. He rose,
And ere our lively greeting into peace
Had settled,² "'Tis," said I, "a burning day:
My lips are parched with thirst, but you, it seems,³
Have somewhere found relief." He, at the word,
Pointing towards a sweet-briar, bade me climb
The fence where that aspiring shrub looked out
Upon the public way.⁴ It was a plot

¹ 1827.

. He had not heard my steps
As I approached; and near him did I stand
Unnotic'd in the shade, some minutes' space. 1814.

² 1827.

And ere the pleasant greeting that ensued
Was ended, 1814.

³ 1827.

. , but you, I guess, 1814.

⁴ 1827.

He, at the word,
Pointing towards a sweet-briar, bade me climb

Of garden ground run wild, its matted weeds
 Marked with the steps of those, whom, as they passed,
 The gooseberry trees that shot in long lank slips,
 Or currants, hanging from their leafless stems
 In scanty strings, had tempted to o'erleap¹
 The broken wall. I looked around, and there,
 Where two tall hedge-rows of thick alder boughs
 Joined in a cold damp nook, espied a well
 Shrouded with willow-flowers and plummy fern.
 My thirst I slaked, and, from the cheerless spot
 Withdrawing, straightway to the shade returned
 Where sate the old Man on the cottage-bench;
 And, while, beside him, with uncovered head,
 I yet was standing, freely to respire,
 And cool my temples in the fanning air,
 Thus did he speak. "I see around me here
 Things which you cannot see: we die, my Friend,
 Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
 And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
 Dies with him, or is changed; and very soon
 Even of the good is no memorial left.*
 —The Poets, in their elegies and songs
 Lamenting the departed, call the groves,

The fence hard by, where that aspiring shrub
 Looked out upon the road. . . .

1814.

. He raised his hand,
 And to a sweet-briar pointing, bade me climb

C.

¹ 1814.

. as they passed
 The gooseberry-trees that showed their dwindled fruit
 Hanging in long lank slips, or leafless strings
 Of currants might have tempted to o'erleap

C.

* Compare "The good is oft interred with their bones."

Hamlet, Act iii. sc. 4.—ED.

They call upon the hills and streams to mourn,*
 And senseless rocks ; nor idly ; for they speak,
 In these their invocations, with a voice
 Obedient to the strong creative power
 Of human passion. Sympathies there are
 More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,
 That steal upon the meditative mind,
 And grow with thought. Beside yon spring I stood,
 And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel
 One sadness, they and I. For them a bond
 Of brotherhood is broken : time has been
 When, every day, the touch of human hand
 Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
 In mortal stillness ; and they ministered
 To human comfort. Stooping down to drink,¹
 Upon the slimy foot-stone I espied
 The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
 Green with the moss of years, and subject only
 To the soft handling of the elements :
 There let it lie—how foolish are such thoughts !
 Forgive them ;—never—never did my steps
 Approach this door but she who dwelt within²

¹ 1827.

. As I stooped to drink 1814.

² 1836.

Green with the moss of years ; a pensive sight
 That moved my heart !—recalling former days
 When I could never pass that road but She
 Who lived within these walls, at my approach 1814.
 Green with the moss of years, and subject only
 To the soft handling of the elements :
 There let the relic lie—fond thought—vain words !

* See Moschus's epitaph on Bion, 1-7, beginning "Αἰλινα μοι στοναχῆϊτε
 νάπαι καὶ Δώρεον ὕδωρ ; and compare Virgil, Ecl. V. 27, 28 ; Georg. I.,
 466-488 ; Georg. IV., 461-463 ; Catullus, Carmen XXXI., *Ad sermonem*
Peninulam, the three last lines. See also Note C in the appendix to this
 volume.—ED.

A daughter's welcome gave me, and I loved her
 As my own child. Oh, Sir! the good die first,*
 And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust.
 Burn to the socket. Many a passenger
 Hath blessed poor Margaret for her gentle looks,
 When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn
 From that forsaken spring; and no one came
 But he was welcome; no one went away
 But that it seemed she loved him. She is dead,
 The light extinguished of her lonely hut,
 The hut itself abandoned to decay,
 And she forgotten in the quiet grave.

I speak," continued he, "of One whose stock
 Of virtues bloomed beneath this lowly roof.
 She was a Woman of a steady mind,
 Tender and deep in her excess of love;
 Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy
 Of her own thoughts: by some especial care
 Her temper had been framed, as if to make
 A Being who by adding love to peace
 Might live on earth a life of happiness.
 Her wedded Partner lacked not on his side

Forgive them—never did my steps approach
 This humble door but she who dwelt therein 1827.

Forgive them;—never—never did my steps
 Approach this door but she who dwelt within 1832.

Green with the moss of years. Upon the simple sight
 As there it lay I could not look unmoved!
 Forgive the weakness—never did step of mine
 Approach this door, but she c.

* Compare *ὃν οἱ θεοὶ φιλοῦσιν, αποθήσκει νέος.*

"Whom the gods love, die young."

Menander, quoted (amongst others) by Plutarch, *Consol. ad Apollonium*, cap. 34. For other authorities, see Meineke's *Comicorum Græcorum Fragmenta*.—ED.

The humble worth that satisfied her heart :
Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
That he was often seated at his loom,*
In summer, ere the mower was abroad
Among the dewy grass,—in early spring,
Ere the last star had vanished.—They who passed
At evening, from behind the garden fence
Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply,
After his daily work, until the light
Had failed, and every leaf and flower were lost
In the dark hedges. So their days were spent
In peace and comfort ; and a pretty boy
Was their best hope, next to the God in heaven.

Not twenty years ago, but you I think
Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there came
Two blighting seasons, when the fields were left
With half a harvest. It pleased Heaven to add
A worse affliction in the plague of war :
This happy Land was stricken to the heart !
A Wanderer then among the cottages,
I, with my freight of winter raiment, saw
The hardships of that season : many rich
Sank down, as in a dream, among the poor ;
And of the poor did many cease to be,
And their place knew them not.† Meanwhile, abridged
Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
To numerous self-denials, Margaret
Went struggling on through those calamitous years
With cheerful hope, until the second autumn,

* The hand-loom was common in many of the cottages of the county, as well as in the manufacturing towns of England and Scotland, until quite recently.—ED.

† Psalm ciii. 16.—ED.

When her life's Helpmate¹ on a sick-bed lay,
 Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
 He lingered long; and, when his strength returned,
 He found the little he had stored, to meet
 The hour of accident or crippling age,
 Was all consumed. A second infant now
 Was added to the troubles of a time
 Laden, for them and all of their degree,
 With care and sorrow; shoals of artisans
 From ill-requited labour turned adrift
 Sought daily bread from public charity,²
 They, and their wives and children—happier far
 Could they have lived as do the little birds
 That peck along the hedge-rows, or the kite
 That makes her dwelling on the mountain rocks!³

A sad reverse it was for him who long
 Had filled with plenty, and possessed in peace,
 This lonely Cottage. At the door he stood,⁴
 And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
 That had no mirth in them;* or with his knife

¹ 1827.

. but ere the second autumn
 Her life's true Help-mate 1814.

² 1827.

Was all consumed. Two children had they now,
 One newly born. As I have said, it was
 A time of trouble; shoals of artisans
 Were from their daily labour turn'd adrift
 To seek their bread from public charity, 1814.

³ 1827.

That peck along the hedges, or the Kite
 That makes his dwelling on the mountain Rocks! 1814.

⁴ 1836.

. At his door he stood, 1814.

* κλυόντες οὐκ ἤκουον.—Æsch., Prom., v. 447. S. Matt. xiii. 13-15.

"Dead life, blind sight, poor mortal-living ghost."

—Shakespeare, Richard III., Act iv. Sc. 4.—Ed.

Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks—
 Then, not less idly, sought, through every nook
 In house or garden, any casual work
 Of use or ornament; and with a strange,
 Amusing, yet uneasy, novelty,
 He mingled,¹ where he might, the various tasks
 Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
 But this endured not; his good humour soon
 Became a weight in which no pleasure was:
 And poverty brought on a petted mood
 And a sore temper: day by day he drooped,
 And he would leave his work—and to the town
 Would turn without an errand his slack steps;²
 Or wander here and there among the fields.
 One while he would speak lightly of his babes,
 And with a cruel tongue: at other times
 He tossed them with a false unnatural joy:
 And 'twas a rueful thing to see the looks
 Of the poor innocent children. 'Every smile,'
 Said Margaret to me, here beneath these trees,
 'Made my heart bleed.' "

At this the Wanderer paused;

And, looking up to those enormous elms,
 He said, "'Tis now the hour of deepest noon.*
 At this still season of repose and peace,
 This hour when all things which are not at rest
 Are cheerful; while this multitude of flies
 With tuneful hum is filling all the air;

¹ 1836.

He blended, 1814.

² 1836.

Without an errand, would direct his steps, 1814.

* Compare *The Waggoner*, Canto First, Vol. III. p. 76.—

"In silence deeper far than that of deepest noon."—ED.

Why should a tear be on an old Man's cheek ? ¹
 Why should we thus, with an untoward mind,
 And in the weakness of humanity,
 From natural wisdom turn our hearts away ;
 To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears ;
 And, feeding on disquiet, thus disturb
 The calm of nature with our restless thoughts ? ”

HE spake with somewhat of a solemn tone :
 But, when he ended, there was in his face
 Such easy cheerfulness, a look so mild, *
 That for a little time it stole away
 All recollection ; and that simple tale
 Passed from my mind like a forgotten sound.
 A while on trivial things we held discourse,
 To me soon tasteless. In my own despite,
 I thought of that poor Woman as of one
 Whom I had known and loved. He had rehearsed
 Her homely tale with such familiar power,
 With such an active countenance, an eye
 So busy, that the things of which he spake
 Seemed present ; and, attention now relaxed,
 A heart-felt chillness crept along my veins.
 I rose ; and, having left the breezy shade,
 Stood drinking comfort from the warmer sun,

¹ 1849.

Is filling all the air with melody ;
 Why should a tear be in an Old Man's eye ?

1814.

* Compare *The Leech-Gatherer*—

“ Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
 Broke from the sable orbs of his yet vivid eyes.”

Vol. II. p. 279.—ED.

That had not cheered me long—ere, looking round¹
 Upon that tranquil Ruin, I returned,
 And begged of the old Man that, for my sake,
 He would resume his story.

He replied,

“It were a wantonness, and would demand
 Severe reproof, if we were men whose hearts
 Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
 Even of the dead ; contented thence to draw
 A momentary pleasure, never marked
 By reason, barren of all future good.
 But we have known that there is often found
 In mournful thoughts, and always might be found,
 A power to virtue friendly ; wer’t not so,
 I am a dreamer among men, indeed
 An idle dreamer ! ’Tis a common tale,
 An ordinary sorrow of man’s life,
 A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
 In bodily form.—But without further bidding
 I will proceed.

While thus it fared with them,
 To whom this cottage, till those hapless years,
 Had been a blessed home, it was my chance
 To travel in a country far remote ;
 And when these lofty elms once more appeared
 What pleasant expectations lured me on
 O’er the flat Common !—With quick step I reached
 The threshold, lifted with light hand the latch ;

¹ 1827.

There was a heart-felt chillness in my veins.—
 I rose ; and, turning from the breezy shade
 Went forth into the open air, and stood
 To drink the comfort of the warmer sun.
 Long time I had not staid, ere, looking round

But, when I entered, Margaret looked at me ¹
 A little while; then turned her head away
 Speechless,—and, sitting down upon a chair,
 Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
 Nor how² to speak to her. Poor Wretch! at last
 She rose from off her seat, and then,—O Sir!
 I cannot *tell* how she pronounced my name:—
 With fervent love, and with a face of grief
 Unutterably helpless, and a look
 That seemed to cling upon me,³ she enquired
 If I had seen her husband. As she spake
 A strange surprise and fear came to my heart,
 Nor had I power to answer ere she told
 That he had disappeared—not two months gone.
 He left his house: two wretched days had past,⁴
 And on the third, as wistfully she raised
 Her head from off her pillow, to look forth,
 Like one in trouble, for returning light,
 Within her chamber-casement she espied
 A folded paper, lying as if placed
 To meet her waking eyes. This tremblingly

¹ 1827.

. far remote.

And glad I was, when, halting by yon gate
 That leads from the green lane, once more I saw
 These lofty elm-trees. Long I did not rest:
 With many pleasant thoughts I cheer'd my way
 O'er the flat Common.—Having reached the door
 I knock'd,—and, when I entered with the hope
 Of usual greeting, Margaret looked at me

1814.

² 1832.

Or how

1814.

³ 1814-1849.

With fervent love, and with a look of grief
 Unutterable, and with a helpless look that seemed
 To cling upon me.

C.

⁴ 1832.

. days had pass'd

1814.

She opened—found no writing, but beheld¹
 Pieces of money carefully enclosed,
 Silver and gold. ‘I shuddered at the sight,’
 Said Margaret, ‘for I knew it was his hand
 That must have placed it there; and ere that day
 Was ended, that long anxious day, I learned,
 From one who by my husband had been sent
 With the sad news,² that he had joined a troop
 Of soldiers, going to a distant land.
 —He left me thus—he could not gather heart
 To take a farewell of me; for he feared
 That I should follow with my babes, and sink
 Beneath the misery of that wandering life.’

This tale did Margaret tell with many tears:
 And, when she ended, I had little power
 To give her comfort, and was glad to take
 Such words of hope from her own mouth as served
 To cheer us both. But long we had not talked
 Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,
 And with a brighter eye she looked around
 As if she had been shedding tears of joy.
 We parted.—’Twas the time of early spring;
 I left her busy with her garden tools;
 And well remember, o’er that fence she looked.
 And, while I paced along the foot-way path,
 Called out, and sent a blessing after me,
 With tender cheerfulness, and with a voice
 That seemed the very sound of happy thoughts.

¹ 1827.

., but therein 1814.

² 1836.

Which placed it there: and ere that day was ended,
 That long and anxious day! I learned from One
 Sent hither by my husband to impart
 The heavy news,

1814.

I roved o'er many a hill and many a dale,
 With my accustomed load ; in heat and cold,
 Through many a wood and many an open ground,
 In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair,
 Drooping or blithe of heart, as might befall ;
 My best companions now the driving winds,
 And now the 'trotting brooks'* and whispering trees,
 And now the music of my own sad steps,
 With many a short-lived thought that passed between,
 And disappeared.

I journeyed back this way,
 When, in the warmth of midsummer, the wheat¹
 Was yellow ; and the soft and bladed grass,†
 Springing afresh, had o'er the hay-field spread
 Its tender verdure. At the door arrived,
 I found that she was absent. In the shade,
 Where now we sit, I waited her return.
 Her cottage, then a cheerful object, wore
 Its customary look,—only, it seemed,²
 The honeysuckle, crowding round the porch,
 Hung down in heavier tufts ; and that bright weed,
 The yellow stone-crop,‡ suffered to take root
 Along the window's edge, profusely grew,
 Blinding the lower panes. I turned aside,
 And strolled into her garden. It appeared
 To lag behind the season, and had lost
 Its pride of neatness. Daisy-flowers and thrift§

¹ 1827.

Towards the wane of Summer ; when the wheat 1814.

² 1827.

.,—only, I thought 1814.

* "Adown some trotting burn's meander."—BURNS.—ED.

† "Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass."

—Lysander in *Midsummer Night's Dream*,
 Act. i. Sc. i., l. 211.—ED.‡ *Sedum acre*.—ED.§ *Statice armerium*.—ED.

Had broken their trim border-lines, and straggled
 O'er paths they used to deck:¹ carnations, once
 Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less
 For the peculiar pains they had required,
 Declined their languid heads, wanting support.²
 The cumbrous bind-weed,* with its wreaths and bells,
 Had twined about her two small rows of peas,
 And dragged them to the earth.

Ere this an hour
 Was wasted.—Back I turned my restless steps ;
 A stranger passed;³ and, guessing whom I sought,
 He said that she was used to ramble far.—
 The sun was sinking in the west ; and now
 I sate with sad impatience. From within
 Her solitary infant cried aloud ;
 Then, like a blast that dies away self-stilled,
 The voice was silent. From the bench I rose ;
 But neither could divert nor soothe my thoughts.
 The spot though fair was very desolate—
 The longer I remained, more desolate :
 And, looking round me, now I first observed
 The corner stones, on either side the porch,⁴

¹ 1845.

From the border lines
 Composed of daisy and resplendent thrift,
 Flowers straggling forth had on those paths encroached
 Which they were used to deck :— 1814.
 Had broken their trim lines, and straggled o'er
 The paths they used to deck: 1827.

² 1832.

. —without support: 1814.

³ 1827.

. steps,
 And, as I walked before the door, it chanced
 A stranger passed ; 1814.

⁴ 1827.

And, looking round, I saw the corner stones,
 Till then unnotic'd, on either side the door 1814.

With dull red stains discoloured, and stuck o'er
 With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the sheep,
 That fed upon the Common, thither came
 Familiarly, and found a couching-place
 Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows fell
 From these tall elms; the cottage-clock struck eight;—
 I turned, and saw her distant a few steps.
 Her face was pale and thin—her figure, too,
 Was changed. As she unlocked the door, she said,
 'It grieves me you have waited here so long,
 But, in good truth, I've wandered much of late;
 And sometimes—to my shame I speak—have need
 Of my best prayers to bring me back again.'
 While on the board she spread our evening meal,
 She told me—interrupting not the work
 Which gave employment to her listless hands—
 That she had parted with her elder child;
 To a kind master on a distant farm
 Now happily apprenticed.—'I perceive
 You look at me, and you have cause; to-day
 I have been travelling far; and many days
 About the fields I wander, knowing this
 Only, that what I seek I cannot find;
 And so I waste my time: for I am changed;
 And to myself,' said she, 'have done much wrong
 And to this ¹ helpless infant. I have slept
 Weeping, and weeping have I waked; my tears ²
 Have flowed as if my body were not such
 As others are; and I could never die.
 But I am now in mind and in my heart

¹ 1832.

And to his 1827.

² 1827.

. . . . I have waked; . . . 1814.

More easy; and I hope,' said she, 'that God ¹
Will give me patience to endure the things
Which I behold at home.'

It would have grieved

Your very soul to see her. Sir, I feel
The story linger in my heart; I fear
'Tis long and tedious; but my spirit clings
To that poor Woman:—so familiarly.
Do I perceive her manner, and her look,
And presence; and so deeply do I feel
Her goodness, that, not seldom, in my walks
A momentary trance comes over me;
And to myself I seem to muse on One
By sorrow laid asleep; or borne away,
A human being destined to awake
To human life, or something very near
To human life, when he shall come again
For whom she suffered. Yes, it would have grieved
Your very soul to see her: evermore
Her eyelids drooped, her eyes downward were cast;²
And, when she at her table gave me food,
She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
Her body was subdued. In every act
Pertaining to her house-affairs, appeared
The careless stillness of a thinking mind
Self-occupied; to which all outward things
Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
I knew not how, and hardly whence they came.

¹ 1832.

that heaven

1814.

² 1849.

were downward cast;

1814.

Ere my departure, to her care I gave,
 For her son's use, some tokens of regard,
 Which with a look of welcome she received ;
 And I exhorted her to place her trust ¹
 In God's good love, and seek his help by prayer.
 I took my staff, and, when I kissed her babe,
 The tears stood in her eyes. I left her then
 With the best hope and comfort I could give :
 She thanked me for my wish ;—but for my hope
 It seemed² she did not thank me.

I returned,

And took my rounds along this road again
 When³ on its sunny bank the primrose flower
 Peeped forth, to give an earnest of the Spring.
 I found her sad and drooping : she had learned
 No tidings of her husband ; if he lived,⁴
 She knew not that he lived ; if he were dead,
 She knew not he was dead. She seemed the same
 In person and appearance ; but her house
 Bespake a sleepy hand of negligence ; *
 The floor was neither dry nor neat, the hearth
 Was comfortless, and her small lot of books,
 Which, in the cottage-window, heretofore

¹ 1827.

. to have her trust 1814.

² 1836.

Methought 1814.

³ 1849.

Ere 1814.

⁴ 1814-1849.

. Time had brought
 No tidings which might lead her anxious mind
 To a source of quiet, if her husband lived, C.

* Mr H. H. Turner suggests that this line would be more naturally written,
 "Bespake a hand of sleepy negligence."

The alteration would be an improvement.—Ed.

Had been piled up against the corner panes
 In seemly order, now, with straggling leaves
 Lay scattered here and there, open or shut,
 As they had chanced to fall. Her infant Babe
 Had from his Mother caught the trick of grief,
 And sighed among its playthings. I withdrew,
 And once again entering the garden saw,¹
 More plainly still, that poverty and grief
 Were now come nearer to her: weeds defaced
 The hardened soil, and knots of withered grass:
 No ridges there appeared of clear black mold,
 No winter greenness; of her herbs and flowers,
 It seemed the better part was gnawed away
 Or trampled into earth; a chain of straw,
 Which had been twined about the slender stem
 Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root;
 The bark was nibbled round by truant sheep.
 —Margaret stood near, her infant in her arms,
 And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
 She said, ‘I fear it will be dead and gone
 Ere Robert come again.’ When to the House
 We had returned together, she enquired²
 If I had any hope:—but for her babe
 And for her little orphan boy, she said,
 She had no wish to live, that she must die
 Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
 Still in its place; his sunday garments hung

¹ 1845.

. Once again
 I turned towards the garden gate, and saw, 1814.

² 1849.

. Towards the House
 Together we returned; and she enquired 1814.

. Back to the house
 We turned together, silent, till she asked

Upon the self-same nail ; his very staff
Stood undisturbed behind the door.

And when,
In bleak December, I retraced this way,
She told me that her little babe was dead,
And she was left alone. She now, released
From her maternal cares, had taken up
The employment common through these wilds, and gained
By spinning hemp, a pittance for herself ;
And for this end had hired a neighbour's boy
To give her needful help. That very time
Most willingly she put her work aside,
And walked with me along the miry road,
Heedless how far ; and, in such piteous sort
That any heart had ached to hear her, begged
That, wheresoe'er I went, I still would ask
For him whom she had lost. We parted then—
Our final parting ; for from that time forth
Did many seasons pass ere I returned
Into this tract again.

Nine tedious years ;
From their first separation, nine long years,
She lingered in unquiet widowhood ;
A Wife and Widow. Needs must it have been
A sore heart-wasting ! I have heard, my Friend,
That in yon arbour oftentimes she sate
Alone, through half the vacant sabbath day ;
And, if a dog passed by, she still would quit
The shade, and look abroad. On this old bench
For hours she sate ; and evermore her eye
Was busy in the distance, shaping things
That made her heart beat quick. You see that path,
Now faint,—the grass has crept o'er its grey line ;
There, to and fro, she paced through many a day

Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp
That girt her waist, spinning the long-drawn thread
With backward steps. Yet ever as there passed
A man whose garments showed the soldier's red,
Or crippled mendicant in sailor's garb,
The little child who sate to turn the wheel
Ceased from his task; and she with faltering voice
Made many a fond enquiry; and when they,
Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,
Her heart was still more sad. And by yon gate,
That bars the traveller's road, she often stood,
And when a stranger horseman came, the latch
Would lift, and in his face look wistfully;
Most happy, if, from aught discovered there
Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor Hut
Sank to decay; for he was gone, whose hand,
At the first nipping of October frost,
Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of straw
Chequered the green-grown thatch. And so she lived
Through the long winter, reckless and alone;
Until her house by frost, and thaw, and rain,
Was sapped; and while she slept, the nightly damps
Did chill her breast; and in the stormy day
Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind,
Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still
She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
Have parted hence; and still that length of road,
And this rude bench, one torturing hope endeared,
Fast rooted at her heart: and here, my Friend,—
In sickness she remained; and here she died;
Last human tenant of these ruined walls!"*

* "The scene of the first book of the poem is, I must own, laid in a tract of country not sufficiently near to that which soon came into view in

The old Man ceased: he saw that I was moved;
 From that low bench, rising instinctively
 I turned aside in weakness, nor had power
 To thank him for the tale which he had told.
 I stood, and leaning o'er the garden wall
 Reviewed that Woman's sufferings; and it seemed
 To comfort me while with a brother's love
 I blessed her in the impotence of grief.
 Then towards the cottage I returned; and traced
 Fondly, though with an interest more mild,¹
 That secret spirit of humanity
 Which, 'mid the calm oblivious tendencies
 Of nature, 'mid her plants, and weeds, and flowers,
 And silent overgrowings, still survived.
 The old Man, noting this, resumed, and said,
 "My Friend! enough to sorrow you have given,
 The purposes of wisdom ask no more:
 Nor more would she have craved as due to One
 Who, in her worst distress, had ofttimes felt
 The unbounded might of prayer; and learned, with soul
 Fixed on the Cross, that consolation springs,
 From sources deeper far than deepest pain,
 For the meek Sufferer.² Why then should we read

¹ 1836.

At length towards the Cottage I returned
 Fondly,—and traced, with interest more mild, 1814.

² From "Nor more would she" to "Sufferer" added in 1845.

the second book, to agree with the fact. All that relates to Margaret, and the ruined cottage, &c., was taken from observations made in the south-west of England; and certainly it would require more than seven-leagued boots to stretch in one morning from a common in Somersetshire, or Dorsetshire, to the heights of Furness Fells, and the deep valleys they embosom." (Fenwick note.)

Compare with the first book of *The Excursion* the first three books of *The Prelude*.—ED.

The forms of things with an unworthy eye?¹
 She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here.
 I well remember that those very plumes,
 Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
 By mist and silent rain-drops silvered o'er,
 As once I passed, into my heart conveyed²
 So still an image of tranquillity,*
 So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
 Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
 That what we feel of sorrow and despair
 From ruin and from change, and all the grief
 That passing shows³ of Being leave behind,
 Appeared an idle dream, that could maintain,
 Nowhere, dominion o'er the enlightened spirit
 Whose meditative sympathies repose
 Upon the breast of Faith. I turned away,⁴
 And walked along my road in happiness."

¹ 1845.

. ask no more :
 Be wise and cheerful ; and no longer read
 The forms of things with an unworthy eye. 1814

. ask no more :
 Doubt not that oft-times in her soul she felt
 The unbounded might of prayer—upon her knees
 Was taught that heavenly consolation springs
 From sources deeper far than deepest pain
 For the meek Sufferer. Why then should we read
 The forms of things with a dejected eye ?
 She sleeps in the calm earth, C

² 1836.

. did to my heart convey 1814.

³ 1845.

The passing shows 1814.

⁴ 1845.

. . . an idle dream, that could not live
 Where meditation was. I turned away 1814.

* Compare—

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give
 Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

—The *Ode on Immortality*.—ED.

He ceased. Ere long the sun declining shot
 A slant and mellow radiance, which began
 To fall upon us, while, beneath the trees,
 We sate on that low bench: and now we felt,
 Admonished thus, the sweet hour coming on.
 A linnet warbled from those lofty elms,
 A thrush sang loud, and other melodies,
 At distance heard, peopled the milder air.
 The old Man rose, and, with a sprightly mien
 Of hopeful preparation, grasped his staff;
 Together casting then a farewell look
 Upon those silent walls, we left the shade;
 And, ere the stars were visible, had reached
 A village-inn,—our evening resting-place.

Book Second.

THE SOLITARY.

ARGUMENT.

The Author describes his travels with the Wanderer, whose character is further illustrated—Morning scene, and view of a Village Wake—Wanderer's account of a Friend whom he purposes to visit—View, from an eminence, of the Valley which his Friend had chosen for his retreat¹—Sound of singing from below—A funeral procession—Descent into the Valley—Observations drawn from the Wanderer at sight of a book accidentally discovered in a recess in the Valley—Meeting with the Wanderer's friend, the Solitary—Wanderer's description of the mode of burial in this mountainous district—Solitary contrasts with this, that of the individual carried a few minutes before from the cottage²—The cottage entered—Description of the Solitary's apartment—Repast there—View, from the window,

¹ —Feelings of the Author at the sight of it. 1814.

(Continued till 1836, when omitted.)

² 1836.

—Brief conversation.

1814.

of two mountain summits; and the Solitary's description of the companionship they afford him—Account of the departed inmate of the cottage—Description of a grand spectacle upon the mountains, with its effect upon the Solitary's mind—Leave¹ the house.

¹ Quit

1814-1832.

IN days of yore how fortunately fared
 The Minstrel! wandering on from hall to hall,
 Baronial court or royal; cheered with gifts
 Munificent, and love, and ladies' praise;
 Now meeting on his road an armed knight,
 Now resting with a pilgrim by the side
 Of a clear brook;—beneath an abbey's roof
 One evening sumptuously lodged; the next,
 Humbly in a religious hospital;
 Or with some merry outlaws of the wood;
 Or haply shrouded in a hermit's cell.
 Him, sleeping or awake, the robber spared;
 He walked—protected from the sword of war
 By virtue of that sacred instrument
 His harp, suspended at the traveller's side;
 His dear companion wheresoe'er he went
 Opening from land to land an easy way
 By melody, and by the charm of verse.
 Yet not the noblest of that honoured Race
 Drew happier, loftier, more empasioned thoughts,
 From his long journeyings and eventful life,
 Than this obscure Itinerant had skill
 To gather, ranging through the tamer ground²
 Of these our unimaginative days;

² 1827.

Than this obscure Itinerant (an obscure,
 But a high-souled and tender-hearted Man)
 Had skill to draw from many a ramble, far
 And wide protracted, through the tamer ground 1814.

Both while he trod the earth in humblest guise
 Accoutred with his burthen and his staff;
 And now, when free to move with lighter pace.

What wonder, then, if I, whose favourite school
 Hath been the fields, the roads, and rural lanes,
 Looked on this guide¹ with reverential love ?
 Each with the other pleased, we now pursued
 Our journey, under favourable skies.²
 Turn wheresoe'er we would, he was a light
 Unfailing: not a hamlet could we pass,
 Rarely a house, that did not yield to him³
 Remembrances ; or from his tongue call forth
 Some way-beguiling tale. Nor less regard
 Accompanied those strains of apt discourse,
 Which nature's various objects might inspire;⁴
 And in the silence of his face I read
 His overflowing spirit. Birds and beasts,
 And the mute fish that glances in the stream,
 And harmless reptile coiling in the sun,
 And gorgeous insect hovering in the air,
 The fowl domestic, and the household dog—
 In his capacious mind, he loved them all :
 Their rights acknowledging he felt for all.
 Oft was occasion given me to perceive
 How the calm pleasures of the pasturing herd

¹ 1827.

. , and rural lanes,
 And pathways winding on from farm to farm,
 Looked on this guide

1814.

² 1836.

. beneath favourable skies.

1814.

³ 1827.

. which did not yield to him

1814.

⁴ 1827.

. might supply:

1814.

To happy contemplation soothed his walk;¹
 How the poor brute's condition, forced to run
 Its course of suffering in the public road,
 Sad contrast ! all too often smote his heart
 With unavailing pity. Rich in love
 And sweet humanity, he was, himself,
 To the degree that he desired, beloved.
 Smiles of good-will from faces that he knew
 Greeted us all day long;² we took our seats
 By many a cottage-hearth, where he received
 The welcome of an Inmate from afar,
 And I at once forgot I was a Stranger.³
 —Nor was he loth to enter ragged huts,
 Huts where his charity was blest;⁴ his voice
 Heard as the voice of an experienced friend.
 And, sometimes—where the poor man held dispute
 With his own mind, unable to subdue
 Impatience through inaptness to perceive
 General distress in his particular lot;
 Or cherishing resentment, or in vain
 Struggling against it; with a soul perplexed,
 And finding in herself⁵ no steady power
 To draw the line of comfort that divides
 Calamity, the chastisement of Heaven,
 From the injustice of our brother men—

¹ 1827.

. soothed his walk
 Along the field and in the shady grove;

1814.

² C. and 1840.

—Greetings and smiles we met with all day long
 From faces that he knew;

1814.

³ 1849.

. an Inmate come from far.

1814.

⁴ 1827.

Wherein his charity was blest;

1814.

⁵ 1827.

. . . in itself

1814.

To him appeal was made as to a judge ;
 Who, with an understanding heart, allayed
 The perturbation ; listened to the plea ;
 Resolved the dubious point ; and sentence gave
 So grounded, so applied, that it was heard
 With softened spirit, even when it condemned.

Such intercourse I witnessed, while we roved,
 Now as his choice directed, now as mine ;
 Or both, with equal readiness of will,
 Our course submitting to the changeful breeze
 Of accident. But when the rising sun
 Had three times called us to renew our walk,
 My Fellow-traveller, with earnest voice,
 As if the thought were but a moment old,
 Claimed absolute dominion for the day.¹
 We started—and he led me toward the hills,²
 Up through an ample vale, with higher hills
 Before us, mountains stern and desolate ;*
 But, in the majesty of distance, now
 Set off, and to our ken appearing fair
 Of aspect, with ærial softness clad,
 And beautified with morning's purple beams.

¹ 1832.

My Fellow Traveller said with earnest voice,
 As if the thought were but a moment old,
 That I must yield myself without reserve
 To his disposal. Glad was I of this :

1814.

My fellow traveller claimed with earnest voice,
 As if the thought were but a moment old,
 An absolute dominion for the day.

1827.

² 1836.

. . . and he led towards the hills,

1814.

* In the Fenwick note Wordsworth says, "In the Poem I suppose that the Pedlar and I ascended from a plain country up the vale of Langdale, and struck off a good way above the chapel to the western side of the Vale." They start from Grasmere, cross over to Langdale by Red Bank and High Close, and walk up the lower part of the valley of Great Langdale, past Elter Water and Chapel Stile.—ED.

The wealthy, the luxurious, by the stress
 Of business roused, or pleasure, ere their time,
 May roll in chariots, or provoke the hoofs
 Of the fleet coursers they bestride, to raise
 From earth the dust of morning, slow to rise;
 And they, if blest with health and hearts at ease,
 Shall lack not their enjoyment:—but how faint
 Compared with ours! who, pacing side by side,
 Could, with an eye of leisure, look on all
 That we beheld; and lend the listening sense
 To every grateful sound of earth and air;
 Pausing at will—our spirits braced, our thoughts
 Pleasant as roses in the thickets blown;
 And pure as dew bathing their crimson leaves.

Mount slowly, sun! that we may journey long,
 By this dark hill protected from thy beams!¹
 Such is the summer pilgrim's frequent wish;
 But quickly from among our morning thoughts²
 'Twas chased away: for, toward the western side³
 Of the broad vale, casting a casual glance,
 We saw a throng of people; wherefore met?
 Blithe notes of music, suddenly let loose
 On the thrilled ear, and flags uprising, yield⁴

¹ 1827.

Mount slowly, Sun! and may our journey lie
 Awhile within the shadow of this hill,
 This friendly hill, a shelter from thy beams!

1814.

² 1827.

. wish;
 And as that wish, with prevalence of thanks
 For present good o'er fear of future ill,
 Stole in among the morning's blither thoughts,

1814.

³ 1827.

. for tow'rds

1814.

⁴ 1827.

. ear, did to the question yield

1814.

Prompt answer; they proclaim the annual Wake,*
 Which the bright season favours.—Tabor and pipe
 In purpose join to hasten or reprove¹
 The laggard Rustic; and repay with boons
 Of merriment a party-coloured knot,
 Already formed upon the village-green.
 —Beyond the limits of the shadow cast
 By the broad hill,† glistened upon our sight
 That gay assemblage. Round them and above,
 Glitter, with dark recesses interposed,
 Casement, and cottage-roof, and stems of trees
 Half-veiled in vapoury cloud, the silver steam
 Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
 By the strong sunbeams smitten. Like a mast
 Of gold, the Maypole shines; as if the rays
 Of morning, aided by exhaling dew,
 With gladsome influence could re-animate
 The faded garlands dangling from its sides.

Said I, “The music and the sprightly scene
 Invite us; shall we quit our road, and join
 These festive matins?”—He replied, “Not loth
 To linger I would here with you partake,”²

¹ 1836.

. and reprove

1814.

² C. and 1849.

Here would I linger, and with you partake,

1814.

* At Chapel Stile the villagers of Langdale are seen at their annual Fair. Miss Wordsworth thus alludes to one of these rural Fairs in her *Grasmere Journal*: “Tuesday, September 2d, 1800. We walked to the Fair. There seemed very few people, and very few stalls, yet I believe there were many cakes, and much beer sold. . . . It was a lovely moonlight night. The moonlight shone only on the village. It did not eclipse the village lights, and the sound of dancing and merriment came along the still air. I walked with Coleridge and William up the lane and by the church, and then lingered with Coleridge in the garden. . .” See also the account of the “village merry-night,” in *The Waggoner* (Vol. III. p. 89).
 —Ed.

† Lingmoor.—Ed.

Not one hour merely, but till evening's close,
 The simple pastimes of the day and place.
 By the fleet Racers, ere the sun be set,
 The turf of yon large pasture will be skimmed ;
 There, too, the lusty Wrestlers shall contend :¹
 But know we not that he, who intermits
 The appointed task and duties of the day,
 Untunes full oft the pleasures of the day ;
 Checking the finer spirits that refuse
 To flow, when purposes are lightly changed ?
 A length of journey yet remains untraced :
 Let us proceed." ² Then, pointing with his staff
 Raised toward those craggy summits,³ his intent
 He thus imparted :—

“ In a spot that lies
 Among yon mountain fastnesses concealed,*
 You will receive, before the hour of noon,
 Good recompense, I hope, for this day's toil,
 From sight of One who lives secluded there,
 Lonesome and lost : of whom, and whose past life,
 (Not to forestall such knowledge as may be
 More faithfully collected from himself)
 This brief communication shall suffice.

Though now sojourning there, he, like myself,
 Sprang from a stock of lowly parentage

¹ 1827.

. will contend : 1814.

² 1849.

We must proceed—a length of journey yet
 Remains untraced." 1814.

A length of journey yet remains untrod,
 Let us proceed" C.

³ 1832.

Towards those craggy summits, . . . 1814.

* At Blea Tarn, where the Solitary lived.—ED.

Among the wilds of Scotland, in a tract
 Where many a sheltered and well-tended plant
 Bears, on the humblest ground of social life,
 Blossoms of piety and innocence.¹
 Such grateful promises his youth displayed :
 And, having shown in study forward zeal,
 He to the Ministry was duly called ;
 And straight, incited by a curious mind
 Filled with vague hopes, he undertook the charge ²
 Of Chaplain to a military troop *
 Cheered by the Highland bagpipe, as they marched
 In plaided vest,—his fellow-countrymen.
 This office filling, yet by native power ³
 And force of native inclination made

¹ 1827.

Upon the humblest ground of social life,
 Doth at this day, I trust, the blossoms bear
 Of piety and simple innocence.

1814.

² 1827.

And, as he showed in study forward zeal,
 All helps were sought, all measures strained, that He,
 By due scholastic discipline prepared,
 Might to the Ministry be called : which done,
 Partly through lack of better hopes—and part
 Perhaps incited by a curious mind,
 In early life he undertook the charge

1814.

³ 1827.

. . . . , and, by native power

1814.

* “ Not long after we took up our abode at Grasmere, came to reside there, from what motive I either never knew or have forgotten, a Scotchman, a little past the middle of life, who had for many years been chaplain to a Highland regiment. He was in no respect, as far as I know, an interesting character, though in his appearance there was a good deal that attracted attention, as if he had been shattered in fortune, and not happy in mind. Of his quondam position I availed myself to connect with the ‘Wanderer,’ also a Scotchman, a character suitable to my purpose, the elements of which I drew from several persons with whom I had been connected, and who fell under my observation during frequent residences in London at the beginning of the French Revolution.” (Fenwick note.)—Ed.

An intellectual ruler in the haunts
 Of social vanity, he walked the world,
 Gay, and affecting graceful gaiety ;
 Lax, buoyant—less a pastor with his flock
 Than a soldier among soldiers—lived and roamed
 Where Fortune led :—and Fortune, who oft proves
 The careless wanderer's friend, to him made known
 A blooming Lady—a conspicuous flower,
 Admired for beauty, for her sweetness praised ;
 Whom he had sensibility to love,
 Ambition to attempt, and skill to win.

For this fair Bride, most rich in gifts of mind,
 Nor sparingly endowed with worldly wealth,
 His office he relinquished ; and retired
 From the world's notice to a rural home.
 Youth's season yet with him was scarcely past,
 And she was in youth's prime. How free their love,
 How full their joy ! 'Till, pitiable doom !¹
 In the short course of one undreaded year,
 Death blasted all. Death suddenly o'erthrew
 Two lovely Children—all that they possessed !
 The Mother followed :—miserably bare
 The one Survivor stood ; he wept, he prayed
 For his dismissal, day and night, compelled
 To hold communion with the grave, and face

¹ 1849.

. How full their joy,
 How free their love ! nor did their love decay ;
 Nor joy abate, till, pitiable doom ! 1814.

. nor did that love decay, 1827.

How free their love, till all by death was blasted
 In one undreaded year, Death swept away
 Two lovely C.

With pain the regions of eternity.¹
 An uncomplaining apathy displaced
 This anguish ; and, indifferent to delight,
 To aim and purpose, he consumed his days,
 To private interest dead, and public care.
 So lived he ; so he might have died.

But now,

To the wide world's astonishment, appeared
 A glorious opening,² the unlooked-for dawn,
 That promised everlasting joy to France ! *
 Her voice of social transport³ reached even him !
 He broke from his contracted bounds, repaired
 To the great City, an emporium then
 Of golden expectations, and receiving
 Freights every day from a new world of hope.
 Thither his popular talents he transferred ;
 And, from the pulpit, zealously maintained
 The cause of Christ and civil liberty,
 As one, and moving to one glorious end.
 Intoxicating service ! I might say
 A happy service ; for he was sincere

¹ 1849.

. , compelled
 By pain to turn his thoughts towards the grave,
 And face the regions of eternity.† 1814.

. , compelled
 To commune with the grave soul-sick, and face
 With pain C.

² 1827.

The glorious opening, 1814.

³ 1827.

. France !
 That sudden light had power to pierce the gloom
 In which his Spirit, friendless upon earth,
 In separation dwelt, and solitude.
 The voice of social transport 1814.

* Compare *The Prelude*, Books IX., X., and XI., *passim*.—ED.

As vanity and fondness for applause,
And new and shapeless wishes, would allow.

That righteous cause (such power hath freedom) bound,
For one hostility, in friendly league,¹
Ethereal natures and the worst of slaves ;
Was served by rival advocates that came
From regions opposite as heaven and hell.
One courage seemed to animate them all :
And, from the dazzling conquests daily gained
By their united efforts, there arose
A proud and most presumptuous confidence
In the transcendent wisdom of the age,
And her discernment ;² not alone in rights,
And in the origin and bounds of power
Social and temporal ; but in laws divine,
Deduced by reason, or to faith revealed.
An overweening trust was raised ; and fear
Cast out, alike of person and of thing.
Plague from this union spread, whose subtle bane
The strongest did not easily escape ;
And He, what wonder ! took a mortal taint.
How shall I trace the change, how bear to tell
That he broke faith with them whom he had laid³
In earth's dark chambers, with a Christian's hope !
An infidel contempt of holy writ
Stole by degrees upon his mind ; and hence
Life, like that Roman Janus, double-faced ;

¹ 1827.

That righteous Cause of freedom did, we know,
Combine, for one hostility, as friends, 1814.

² 1827.

And its discernment ; 1814.

³ 1827.

. . . with those whom he had laid 1814.

Vilest hypocrisy—the laughing, gay
 Hypocrisy, not leagued with fear, but pride.
 Smooth words he had to wheedle simple souls ;
 But, for disciples of the inner school,
 Old freedom was old servitude, and they
 The wisest whose opinions stooped the least
 To known restraints ; and who most boldly drew
 Hopeful prognostications from a creed,
 That,¹ in the light of false philosophy,
 Spread like a halo round a misty moon,
 Widening its circle as the storms advance.

His sacred function was at length renounced ;
 And every day and every place enjoyed
 The unshackled layman's natural liberty ;
 Speech, manners, morals, all without disguise.
 I do not wish to wrong him ; though the course
 Of private life licentiously displayed
 Unhallowed actions—planted like a crown
 Upon the insolent aspiring brow
 Of spurious notions—worn as open signs
 Of prejudice subdued—still he retained,²
 'Mid much abasement,³ what he had received
 From nature, an intense and glowing mind.
 Wherefore, when humbled Liberty grew weak,
 And mortal sickness on her face appeared,
 He coloured objects to his own desire
 As with a lover's passion. Yet his moods
 Of pain were keen as those of better men,

¹ 1827.

Which 1814.

² 1836.

. —he still retained, 1814.

³ 1836.

'Mid such abasement . . . 1814.

Nay keener, as his fortitude was less :
 And he continued, when worse days were come,
 To deal about his sparkling eloquence,
 Struggling against the strange reverse with zeal
 That shewed like happiness. But, in despite
 Of all this outside bravery, within,
 He neither felt encouragement nor hope :
 For moral dignity, and strength of mind,
 Were wanting ; and simplicity of life ;
 And reverence for himself ; and, last and best,
 Confiding thoughts, through love and fear of Him ¹
 Before whose sight the troubles of this world
 Are vain, as billows in a tossing sea.

The glory of the times fading away—
 The splendour, which had given a festal air
 To self-importance, hallowed it, and veiled
 From his own sight—this gone, he forfeited²
 All joy in human nature ; was consumed,
 And vexed, and chafed, by levity and scorn,
 And fruitless indignation ; galled by pride ;
 Made desperate by contempt of men who throve
 Before his sight in power or fame, and won,
 Without desert, what he desired ; weak men,
 Too weak even for his envy or his hate !
 Tormented thus, after a wandering course
 Of discontent, and inwardly oppress³

¹ 1827.

. . . . and love and fear of him

1814.

² 1827.

. . . . —this gone, therewith he lost

1814.

³ 1827.

. hate !

—And thus beset, and finding in himself

Nor pleasure nor tranquillity, at last

After a wandering course of discontent

In foreign Lands, and inwardly oppressed

1814.

With malady—in part, I fear, provoked
 By weariness of life—he fixed his home,
 Or, rather say, sate down by very chance,
 Among these rugged hills ; where now he dwells,
 And wastes the sad remainder of his hours,
 Steeped in a self-indulging spleen, that wants not¹
 Its own voluptuousness ;—on this resolved,
 With this content, that he will live and die
 Forgotten,—at safe distance from ‘ a world
 Not moving to his mind.’ ”

These serious words
 Closed the preparatory notices
 That served my Fellow-traveller to beguile²
 The way, while we advanced up that wide vale.*
 Diverging now (as if his quest had been³
 Some secret of the mountains, cavern, fall
 Of water, or some lofty eminence,⁴
 Renowned for splendid prospect far and wide)
 We scaled, without a track to ease our steps,
 A steep ascent ; † and reached a dreary plain,⁵ ‡

¹ 1849.

In self-indulging spleen, that doth not want 1814.

² 1827.

With which my Fellow-traveller had beguiled 1814.

³ 1827.

Now, suddenly diverging, he began
 To climb upon its western side a Ridge
 Pathless and smooth, a long and steep ascent ;
 As if the object of his quest had been 1814.

⁴ 1849.

. . . or some boastful eminence 1814.

⁵ 1827.

We clomb without a track to guide our steps ;
 And, on the summit, reached a heathy plain, 1814.

* Langdale.—ED.

† The flank of Lingmoor.—ED.

‡ The flat heathery summit of Lingmoor. Note the text of 1814.—ED.

With a tumultuous waste of huge hill tops
 Before us,* savage region! which I paced
 Dispirited:¹ when, all at once, behold!
 Beneath our feet, a little lowly vale,†
 A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high
 Among the mountains; even as if the spot
 Had been from eldest time by wish of theirs
 So placed, to be shut out from all the world!
 Urn-like it was in shape, deep as an urn;‡
 With rocks encompassed, save that to the south
 Was one small opening,‡ where a heath-clad ridge
 Supplied a boundary less abrupt and close;
 A quiet treeless nook, with two green fields,§
 A liquid pool that glittered in the sun,||
 And one bare dwelling; one abode, no more!¶
 It seemed the home of poverty and toil,
 Though not of want: the little fields, made green

¹ 1827.

. ! and I walked
 In weariness:

1814.

* Bowfell, Great End, Shelter Crag, and Pike o' Blisco to the west straight before them, the Langdale Pikes to the north on the right, with Wrynose, Wetherlam, and the Conistone Mountains to the south-west.—ED.

† The head of little Langdale, with Blea Tarn in the centre, as seen from the top of Lingmoor, the only point, except the summit of Blake Rigg, from which it appears "urn-like."—ED.

‡ The "small opening, where a heath-clad ridge supplied a boundary," is that which leads down into Little Langdale by Fell Foot and Busk.—ED.

§ The "nook" is not now "treeless," but the fir-wood on the western side of the Vale adds to its "quiet," and deepens the sense of seclusion.—ED.

|| Blea Tarn. "The scene in which this small piece of water lies, suggested to the Author the following description (given in his poem of *The Excursion*), supposing the spectator to look down upon it, not from the road, but from one of its elevated sides." (Wordsworth's *Description of the Scenery of the District of the Lakes*.)—ED.

¶ The solitary cottage, called Blea Tarn house, which is passed on the left of the road under Side Pike.—ED.

By husbandry of many thrifty years,
 Paid cheerful tribute to the moorland house.
 —There crows the cock, single in his domain :
 The small birds find in spring no thicket there
 To shroud them ; only from the neighbouring vales
 The cuckoo, straggling up to the hill tops,
 Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.

Ah ! what a sweet Recess, thought I, is here !
 Instantly throwing down my limbs at ease
 Upon a bed of heath ;—full many a spot
 Of hidden beauty have I chanced to espy
 Among the mountains ; never one like this ;
 So lonesome, and so perfectly secure ;
 Not melancholy—no, for it is green,
 And bright, and fertile, furnished in itself
 With the few needful things that life requires.¹
 —In rugged arms how softly does it lie,²
 How tenderly protected ! Far and near
 We have an image of the pristine earth,
 The planet in its nakedness : were this
 Man's only dwelling, sole appointed seat,
 First, last, and single, in the breathing world,
 It could not be more quiet : peace is here
 Or nowhere ; days unruffled by the gale
 Of public news or private ; years that pass
 Forgetfully ; uncalled upon to pay
 The common penalties of mortal life,
 Sickness, or accident, or grief, or pain.

On these and kindred thoughts intent I lay

¹ 1827.

. which life requires

1814.

² 1836.

. how soft it seems to lie

1814.

In silence musing by my Comrade's side,¹
 He also silent ; when from out the heart
 Of that profound abyss a solemn voice,
 Or several voices in one solemn sound,
 Was heard ascending ; mournful, deep, and slow
 The cadence, as of psalms—a funeral dirge !*
 We listened, looking down upon the hut,²
 But seeing no one : meanwhile from below
 The strain continued, spiritual as before ;
 And now distinctly could I recognise
 These words :—‘ *Shall in the grave thy love be known,
 In death thy faithfulness?*’—“God rest his soul!”³

¹ 1827.

On these and other kindred thoughts intent,
 In silence by my Comrade's side I lay, 1814.

² 1827.

. towards the Hut, 1814.

³ 1814-1849.

. These words,
 Said my companion, sighing as he spoke,
 Were chosen by himself, God rest his soul. C.

* The following is from Miss Wordsworth's Grasmere Journal. Wednesday, 3d September 1880.—“I went to a funeral at John Dawson's. About ten men and four women : the dead person buried by the parish : they set the corpse down at the door, and while we stood within the threshold, the men with their hats off sang, with decent and solemn countenances, a verse of a funeral psalm. The corpse was then borne down the hill, and they sang till they had passed the Town-end. I was affected to tears while we stood in the house. There were no near kindred, no children. When we got out of the dark house, the sun was shining and the prospect looked divinely beautiful. . . . It seemed more sacred than I had ever seen it, and yet more allied to human life. . . . When we came to the bridge, they began to sing again, and stopped during four lines before they entered the church-yard.” Compare this with such phrases in *The Excursion* as—

“They shaped their course along the sloping side
 Of that small valley, singing as they moved:
 A sober company and few, the men
 Bare-headed.” —(p. 82.)

“We heard the hymn they sang,—a solemn sound
 Heard any where; but in a place like this
 'Tis more than human.” —(p. 89.)—ED.

Said the old man,¹ abruptly breaking silence,—
 “He is departed, and finds peace at last!”

This scarcely spoken, and those holy strains
 Not ceasing, forth appeared in view a band
 Of rustic persons, from behind the hut
 Bearing a coffin in the midst, with which
 They shaped their course along the sloping side
 Of that small valley, singing as they moved; *
 A sober company and few, the men
 Bare-headed, and all decently attired!
 Some steps when they had thus advanced, the dirge
 Ended; and, from the stillness that ensued
 Recovering, to my Friend I said, “You spake,
 Methought, with apprehension that these rites
 Are paid to Him upon whose shy retreat
 This day we purposed to intrude.”—“I did so,
 But let us hence, that we may learn the truth:
 Perhaps it is not he but some one else²
 For whom this pious service is performed;
 Some other tenant of the solitude.”

So, to a steep and difficult descent
 Trusting ourselves, we wound from crag to crag,
 Where passage could be won;† and, as the last
 Of the mute train, behind the heathy top³

¹ 1849.

The Wanderer cried, 1814.

² 1814-1849.

He is it not perhaps but some one else. C.

³ 1836.

. upon the heathy top 1814.

* See last note.—ED.

† Descending from the top of Lingmoor to Blea Tarn.—ED.

Of that off-sloping outlet,* disappeared,
 I, more impatient in my downward course,¹
 Had landed upon easy ground; and there
 Stood waiting for my Comrade. When behold
 An object that enticed my steps aside!
 A narrow, winding, entry opened out²
 Into a platform—that lay, sheepfold-wise,
 Enclosed between an upright mass of rock³
 And one old moss-grown wall;—a cool recess,
 And fanciful! For where the rock and wall
 Met in an angle, hung a penthouse, framed
 By thrusting two rude staves into the wall⁴
 And overlaying them with mountain sods;
 To weather-fend a little turf-built seat
 Whereon a full-grown man might rest, nor dread
 The burning sunshine, or a transient shower;
 But the whole plainly wrought by children's hands!†
 Whose skill had thronged the floor with a proud show⁵

¹ 1827. in the course I took 1814.

² 1827. aside!
 It was an Entry, narrow as a door;
 A passage whose brief windings open out 1814.

³ 1827. a single mass of rock 1814.

⁴ 1827. Met in an angle, hung a tiny roof,
 Or penthouse, which most quaintly had been framed
 By thrusting two rude sticks into the wall 1814.

⁵ 1827. Whose simple skill had thronged the grassy floor
 With work of frame less solid, a proud show 1814.

* The upper part of Little Langdale, descending to Fell Foot.—ED.

† A spot exactly similar to this can easily be found, about two hundred yards above the house, in the narrow gorge of Blea Tarn Ghyll, below a waterfall, where a "moss-grown wall" still approaches the rock on the other side of the stream, and where a "pent-house" might easily be made by children.—ED.

Of baby-houses, curiously arranged ;
 Nor wanting ornament of walks between,
 With mimic trees inserted in the turf,
 And gardens interposed. Pleased with the sight,
 I could not choose but beckon to my Guide,
 Who, entering, round him threw a careless glance,
 Impatient to pass on, when I exclaimed,¹
 "Lo ! what is here ?" and, stooping down, drew forth
 A book, that, in the midst of stones and moss
 And wreck of party-coloured earthen-ware,*
 Aptly disposed, had lent its help to raise
 One of those petty structures. "His it must be !"
 Exclaimed the Wanderer, "cannot but be his,²
 And he is gone !" ³ The book, which in my hand
 Had opened of itself (for it was swoln
 With searching damp, and seemingly had lain
 To the injurious elements exposed
 From week to week,) I found to be a work
 In the French tongue, a Novel of Voltaire,
 His famous Optimist. "Unhappy Man !"
 Exclaimed my Friend : "here then has been to him
 Retreat within retreat, a sheltering place
 Within how deep a shelter ! He had fits,

¹ 1827.

Who, having entered, carelessly looked round,
 And now would have passed on ; when I exclaimed, 1814.

² 1845.

. "Gracious Heaven !"
 The Wanderer cried, "it cannot but be his, 1814.

³ 1814-1849.

"It cannot," said the Wanderer, "but be his,
 And he is gone !" C.

* It may not be too trivial to note that, to this day, in the Cumberland and Westmoreland vales, one of the favourite games of children on the fell-sides near their cottages, is playing at mimic gardens and parterres, made out of fragments of broken pottery.—Ed.

Even to the last, of genuine tenderness,
 And loved the haunts of children: here, no doubt,
 Pleasing and pleased, he shared their simple sports,
 Or sate companionless; and here the book,
 Left and forgotten in his careless way,
 Must by the cottage-children have been found:¹
 Heaven bless them, and their inconsiderate work!
 To what odd purpose have the darlings turned
 This sad memorial of their hapless friend!"

"Me," said I, "most doth it surprise to find
 Such book in such a place!"—"A book it is,"
 He answered, "to the Person suited well,
 Though little suited to surrounding things:
 'Tis strange, I grant; and stranger still had been
 To see the Man who owned it, dwelling here,²
 With one poor shepherd, far from all the world!—
 Now, if our errand hath been thrown away,
 As from these intimations I forebode,
 Grieved shall I be—less for my sake than yours,
 And least of all for him who is no more."

By this, the book was in the old Man's hand;
 And he continued, glancing on the leaves
 An eye of scorn:—"The lover," said he, "doomed

¹ 1827.

. ; here no doubt
 He sometimes played with them; and here hath sate
 Far oftener by himself. This Book, I guess,
 Hath been forgotten in his careless way;
 Left here when he was occupied in mind;
 And by the Cottage Children has been found. 1814.

² 1827.

. things;
 Nor, with the knowledge which my mind possessed,
 Could I behold it undisturbed: 'tis strange,
 I grant, and stranger still had been to see
 The Man, who was its owner, dwelling here, 1814.

To love when hope hath failed him—whom no depth
 Of privacy is deep enough to hide,
 Hath yet his bracelet or his lock of hair,
 And that is joy to him. When change of times
 Hath summoned kings to scaffolds, do but give
 The faithful servant, who must hide his head
 Henceforth in whatsoever nook he may,
 A kerchief sprinkled with his master's blood,
 And he too hath his comforter. How poor,
 Beyond all poverty how destitute,
 Must that Man have been left, who, hither driven,
 Flying or seeking, could yet bring with him
 No dearer relique, and no better stay,
 Than this dull product of a scoffer's pen,*
 Impure conceits discharging from a heart
 Hardened by impious pride!—I did not fear
 To tax you with this journey;”—mildly said
 My venerable Friend, as forth we stepped
 Into the presence of the cheerful light—
 “For I have knowledge that you do not shrink
 From moving spectacles;—but let us on.”

So speaking, on he went, and at the word
 I followed, till he made a sudden stand:
 For full in view, approaching through a gate¹
 That opened from the enclosure of green fields
 Into the rough uncultivated ground,†
 Behold the Man whom he had fancied dead!
 I knew from his deportment, mien, and dress,²

¹ 1827.

. through the gate 1814.

² 1827.

I knew, from the appearance and the dress, 1814.

* See Charles Lamb's remark in Note H, Appendix to this volume.—ED.

† The flat ground on the more level part of the valley near Blea Tarn cottage.—ED.

That it could be no other ; a pale face,
 A meagre person, tall, and in a garb¹
 Not rustic—dull and faded like himself !
 He saw us not, though distant but few steps ;
 For he was busy, dealing, from a store
 Upon a broad leaf carried, choicest strings
 Of red ripe currants ;² gift by which he strove,
 With intermixture of endearing words,
 To soothe a Child, who walked beside him, weeping
 As if disconsolate.—“ They to the grave
 Are bearing him, my Little-one,” he said,
 “ To the dark pit ; but he will feel no pain ;
 His body is at rest, his soul in heaven.”

More might have followed—but my honoured Friend
 Broke in upon the Speaker with a frank
 And cordial greeting.—Vivid was the light
 That flashed and sparkled from the other’s eyes ;³ *
 He was all fire : no shadow on his brow
 Remained, nor sign of sickness on his face.⁴
 Hands joined he with his Visitant,—a grasp,

¹ 1827.

A tall and meagre person, in a garb

1814.

² 1827.Which on a leaf he carried in his hand,
 Strings of ripe currants ; . . .

1814.

³ 1827.Glad was my Comrade now, though he at first,
 I doubt not, had been more surprized than glad.
 But now, recovered from the shock and calm,
 He soberly advanced ; and to the Man
 Gave cheerful greeting.—Vivid was the light
 Which flashed at this from out the Other’s eyes ;

1814.

⁴ 1849.He was all fire : the sickness from his face
 Passed like a fancy that is swept away ;

1814.

* Compare *Resolution and Independence*, Stanza 13 (Vol. II. p. 279).
 —ED.

An eager grasp ; and many moments' space—
 When the first glow of pleasure was no more,
 And, of the sad appearance which at once
 Had vanished, much was come and coming back—¹
 An amicable smile retained the life
 Which it had unexpectedly received,
 Upon his hollow cheek. “How kind,” he said,
 “Nor could your coming have been better timed ;
 For this, you see, is in our narrow world²
 A day of sorrow. I have here a charge”—
 And, speaking thus, he patted tenderly
 The sun-burnt forehead of the weeping child—
 “A little mourner, whom it is my task
 To comfort ;—but how came ye ?—if yon track
 (Which doth at once befriend us and betray)
 Conducted hither your most welcome feet,
 Ye could not miss the funeral train—they yet
 Have scarcely disappeared.” “This blooming Child,”
 Said the old Man, “is of an age to weep.
 At any grave or solemn spectacle,
 Inly distressed or overpowered with awe,
 He knows not wherefore ;—but the boy to-day,
 Perhaps is shedding orphan's tears ; you also³
 Must have sustained a loss.”—“The hand of Death,”
 He answered, “has been here ; but could not well
 Have fallen more lightly, if it had not fallen
 Upon myself.”—The other left these words
 Unnoticed, thus continuing—

¹ 1841.

And much of what had vanished was returned, 1814.

² 1827.

. . . . , is in our little world 1814.

³ 1849.He knows not why ;—but he, perchance, this day,
 Is shedding Orphan's tears ; and you yourself 1814.

“From yon crag,
 Down whose steep sides we dropped into the vale,
 We heard the hymn they sang—a solemn sound
 Heard any where; but in a place like this
 ’Tis more than human! Many precious rites
 And customs of our rural ancestry
 Are gone, or stealing from us; this, I hope,
 Will last for ever.* Oft on my way have I
 Stood still, though but a casual passenger,
 So much I felt the awfulness of life,¹
 In that one moment when the corse is lifted
 In silence, with a hush of decency;
 Then from the threshold moves with song of peace,
 And confidential yearnings, towards its home,
 Its final home on earth.² What traveller—who—
 (How far soe’er a stranger) does not own
 The bond of brotherhood, when he sees them go,
 A mute procession on the houseless road;
 Or passing by some single tenement
 Or clustered dwellings, where again they raise

¹ 1836.

. Often have I stopped
 When on my way, I could not chuse but stop,
 1814.

. Often have I stopped,
 So much I felt the awfulness of life, 1827.

. Often have I stopped
 When on my way, I could not chuse but stop,
 1832.

² 1849.

. , to its home,
 Its final home in earth. 1814.

. , to its home,
 Its final home on earth. 1836.

* Compare the note p. 81; also the Fenwick note, in which Wordsworth laments the change in the “manner in which, till lately, every one was borne to the place of sepulture.”—ED.

The monitory voice? But most of all
 It touches, it confirms, and elevates,
 Then, when the body, soon to be consigned
 Ashes to ashes, dust bequeathed to dust,
 Is raised from the church-aisle, and forward borne
 Upon the shoulders of the next in love,
 The nearest in affection or in blood;
 Yea, by the very mourners who had knelt
 Beside the coffin, resting on its lid
 In silent grief their unuplifted heads,*
 And heard meanwhile the Psalmist's mournful plaint,
 And that most awful scripture which declares
 We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed!
 —Have I not seen—ye likewise may have seen—
 Son, husband, brothers—brothers side by side,
 And son and father also side by side,
 Rise from that posture:—and in concert move,
 On the green turf following the vested Priest,
 Four dear supporters of one senseless weight,
 From which they do not shrink, and under which
 They faint not, but advance towards the open grave¹
 Step after step—together, with their firm
 Unhidden faces: he that suffers most,
 He outwardly, and inwardly perhaps,
 The most serene, with most undaunted eye!—
 Oh! blest are they who live and die like these,
 Loved with such love, and with such sorrow mourned!"

"That poor Man taken hence to-day," replied
 The Solitary, with a faint sarcastic smile

¹ 1836.

. towards the grave

1814.

* The custom of mourners kneeling round the coffin was, till quite lately, in common use. It is still observed in some churches in Cumberland and Westmoreland, but is gradually passing away.—Ed.

Which did not please me, "must be deemed, I fear,
 Of the unblest; for he will surely sink
 Into his mother earth without such pomp
 Of grief, depart without occasion given
 By him for such array of fortitude.
 Full seventy winters hath he lived, and mark!
 This simple Child will mourn his one short hour,
 And I shall miss him: scanty tribute! yet,
 This wanting, he would leave the sight of men,
 If love were his sole claim upon their care,
 Like a ripe date which in the desert falls
 Without a hand to gather it."

At this

I interposed, though loth to speak, and said,
 "Can it be thus among so small a band
 As ye must needs be here? in such a place
 I would not willingly, methinks, lose sight
 Of a departing cloud."—" 'Twas not for love,"
 Answered the sick Man with a careless voice—
 "That I came hither; neither have I found
 Among associates who have power of speech,
 Nor in such other converse as is here,
 Temptation so prevailing as to change
 That mood, or undermine my first resolve."
 Then, speaking in like careless sort, he said
 To my benign Companion,—“Pity 'tis
 That fortune did not guide you to this house
 A few days earlier; then would you have seen
 What stuff the Dwellers in a solitude
 That seems by Nature hollowed out to be
 The seat and bosom of pure innocence,¹

¹ 1827.

. in this Solitude,
 (That seems by Nature framed to be the seat
 And very bosom of pure innocence)

Are made of, an ungracious matter this !
 Which, for truth's sake, yet in remembrance too
 Of past discussions with this zealous friend
 And advocate of humble life, I now
 Will force upon his notice ; undeterred
 By the example of his own pure course,
 And that respect and deference which a soul
 May fairly claim, by niggard age enriched
 In what she most doth value, love of God ¹
 And his frail creature Man ;—but ye shall hear.
 I talk—and ye are standing in the sun
 Without refreshment ! ”

Quickly had he spoken,
 And, with light steps still quicker than his words,
 Led toward the cottage.² Homely was the spot ;
 And, to my feeling, ere we reached the door,
 Had almost a forbidding nakedness ;
 Less fair, I grant, even painfully less fair,
 Than it appeared when from the beetling rock ³
 We had looked down upon it. All within,
 As left by the departed company,⁴
 Was silent ; save the solitary clock
 That on mine ear ticked with a mournful sound.—⁵

¹ 1849.

In what it values most—the love of God	1814.
In what she values most—the love of God.	1827.
And more as years are multiplied	
With what she most delights in, love of God	
And his frail creature man.	C.

² 1836.

Saying this he led	
Towards the cottage ;	1814.

³ 1827.

when from the Valley's brink,	1814.
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⁴ 1827.

As left by that departed company,	1814.
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⁵ 1849.

Was silent ; and the solitary clock	
Ticked, as I thought, with melancholy sound.—	1814.

Following our Guide, we clomb the cottage-stairs
 And reached a small apartment dark and low,
 Which was no sooner entered than our Host
 Said gaily, "This is my dōmain, my cell,
 My hermitage, my cabin, what you will—
 I love it better than a snail his house.
 But now ye shall be feasted with our best." *

So, with more ardour than an unripe girl
 Left one day mistress of her mother's stores,
 He went about his hospitable task.
 My eyes were busy, and my thoughts no less,
 And pleased I looked upon my grey-haired Friend,
 As if to thank him; he returned that look,
 Cheered, plainly, and yet serious. What a wreck
 Had we about us! ¹ scattered was the floor,
 And, in like sort, chair, window-seat, and shelf,
 With books, maps, fossils, withered plants, and flowers,

¹ 1849.

We had around us ! 1814.

Had we around us ! 1827.

* Blea Tarn house is a humble cottage, resembling Anne Tyson's house at Hawkshead where Wordsworth lived when at school. On the ground-floor are a parlour, kitchen, and dairy. You ascend by nine stone steps to the upper flat, where there are four small rooms, and the window of one of them faces the north in the direction of the Langdale Pikes. The foundations of an older house may be seen a little lower down, about twenty yards nearer the tarn; but the present house was probably standing at the beginning of this century. As there are two poplars to the north of the cottage, and a sycamore near them, it is not likely that the place was *entirely* "treeless" in Wordsworth's time. In the Fenwick memoranda he says 'the cottage was called Hackett, and stood, as described, on the southern extremity of the ridge which separates the two Langdales.' In this he evidently confounds Hackett cottage, near Colwith—which separates the two Langdales as you ascend them from the lower country—with the Blea Tarn cottage, which stands on "the southern extremity of the ridge which separates the Langdale" valleys as you descend them.—ED.

And tufts of mountain moss. Mechanic tools
 Lay intermixed with scraps of paper, some ¹
 Scribbled with verse: a broken angling-rod
 And shattered telescope, together linked
 By cobwebs, stood within a dusty nook;
 And instruments of music, some half-made,
 Some in disgrace, hung dangling from the walls.
 But speedily the promise was fulfilled;
 A feast before us, and a courteous Host
 Inviting us in glee to sit and eat.
 A napkin, white as foam of that rough brook
 By which it had been bleached, o'erspread the board;
 And was itself half-covered with a store ²
 Of dainties,—oaten bread, curd, cheese, and cream;
 And cakes of butter curiously embossed,
 Butter that had imbibed from meadow-flowers
 A golden hue, delicate as their own
 Faintly reflected in a lingering stream.³
 Nor lacked, for more delight on that warm day,
 Our table, small parade of garden fruits,
 And whortle-berries from the mountain side.
 The Child, who long ere this had stilled his sobs,
 Was now a help to his late comforter,

¹ 1827.

. moss; and here and there
 Lay, intermixed with these, mechanic tools,
 And scraps of paper,—some I could perceive 1814.

² 1849.

. with a load 1814.

³ 1832.

Butter that had imbibed a golden tinge,
 A hue like that of yellow meadow flowers
 Reflected faintly in a silent pool. 1814.

.
 From meadow flowers, hue delicate as theirs
 Faintly reflected in a lingering stream; 1827.

And moved, a willing Page, as he was bid,
Ministering to our need.

In genial mood,
While at our pastoral banquet thus we sate
Fronting the window of that little cell,
I could not, ever and anon, forbear
To glance an upward look on two huge Peaks,
That from some other vale peered into this.*
“Those lusty twins,” exclaimed our host, “if here
It were your lot to dwell, would soon become¹
Your prized companions.—Many are the notes
Which, in his tuneful course, the wind draws forth
From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and dashing shores;
And well those lofty brethren bear their part
In the wild concert—chiefly when the storm

¹ 1827.

“Those lusty Twins on which your eyes are cast,”
Exclaimed our Host, “if here you dwelt, would be 1814.

* It is generally supposed that the

. “two huge Peaks,
That from some other vale peered into this,”

are the Langdale Pikes; and it is the most likely supposition. But, if the three were seated, as described, in the upper room of the cottage (which has one small window looking toward the Pikes), they could not possibly see them. Side Pike and Pike o' Blisco alone could be seen. Either then, these are the peaks referred to; or, what is much more likely, the realism of the narrative here gives way; and the far finer pikes of Langdale are introduced—although they are not visible from the house—because they belong to the district, and can be seen from so many points around. The phrases “from some other vale” and “lusty twins” point unmistakably to those two characteristic pikes which “peer” over the crest of the ridge dividing the Langdale valleys. “Let a man,” says Dr Cradock, “as he approaches Blea Tarn from Little Langdale, see these slowly rising, and peering alone over the depression (or Haws) which divides the Langdales, and he cannot doubt that they are the ‘lusty twins.’ Let the Haws be in shadow, and the Pikes in sunlight, or the reverse, and the effect is one of the most striking in all the district.” Compare the sonnet, *Nov. 1, 1815*, beginning—

“How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright.”

—ED.

Rides high ; then all the upper air they fill
 With roaring sound, that ceases not to flow,
 Like smoke, along the level of the blast,
 In mighty current ; theirs, too, is the song
 Of stream and headlong flood that seldom fails ;
 And, in the grim and breathless hour of noon,
 Methinks that I have heard them echo back
 The thunder's greeting. Nor have nature's laws
 Left them ungifted with a power to yield
 Music of finer tone ;¹ a harmony,
 So do I call it, though it be the hand
 Of silence, though there be no voice ;—the clouds,
 The mist, the shadows, light of golden suns,
 Motions of moonlight, all come thither—touch,
 And have an answer—thither come, and shape
 A language not unwelcome to sick hearts
 And idle spirits :—there the sun himself,
 At the calm close of summer's longest day,*
 Rests his substantial orb ;—between those heights
 And on the top of either pinnacle,
 More keenly than elsewhere in night's blue vault,
 Sparkle the stars, as of their station proud.
 Thoughts are not busier in the mind of man
 Than the mute agents stirring there :—alone
 Here do I sit and watch.”—†

A fall of voice,

¹ 1827.

Music of finer frame ; . . .

1814.

* This is strictly accurate. On and about the 21st June, the sun, as seen from Blea Tarn, sets just between the Langdale Pikes.—ED.

† “Mark how the wind rejoices in these peaks, and they give back its wild pleasure : how all the things which touch and haunt them get their reply ; how they are loved and love ; how busy are the mute agents there ; how proud the stars to shine on them.” (Stopford Brooke's *Theology in the English Poets*, p. 108.)—ED.

Regretted like the nightingale's last note,
 Had scarcely closed this high-wrought strain of rapture
 Ere with inviting smile the Wanderer said :¹
 "Now for the tale with which you threatened us!"
 "In truth the threat escaped me unawares :
 Should the tale tire you, let this challenge stand
 For my excuse. Dissevered from mankind,
 As to your eyes and thoughts we must have seemed²
 When ye looked down upon us from the crag,
 Islanders mid³ a stormy mountain sea,
 We are not so ;—perpetually we touch
 Upon the vulgar ordinances⁴ of the world ;
 And he, whom this our cottage hath to-day
 Relinquished, lived dependent for his bread⁵
 Upon the laws of public charity.
 The Housewife, tempted by such slender gains
 As might from that occasion be distilled,
 Opened, as she before had done for me,
 Her doors to admit this homeless Pensioner ;
 The portion gave of coarse but wholesome fare

1849.

With brightening face

The Wanderer heard him speaking thus, and said : 1814.

A fall of voice,

Regretted like the nightingale's last note,
 Had scarcely closed this high-wrought rhapsody, 1827.
 Had scarcely closed this strain of thankful rapture, C.

² 1827.

And was forgotten. Let this challenge stand
 For my excuse, if what I shall relate
 Tire your attention.—Outcast and cut off
 As we seem here, and must have seemed to you, 1814.

³ 1849.

Islanders of 1814.

⁴ 1836.

. . . vulgar ordinance . . . 1814.

⁵ 1827.

. . . was dependent for his bread 1814.

Which appetite required—a blind dull nook,
 Such as she had, the *kennel* of his rest !
 This, in itself not ill, would yet have been
 Ill borne in earlier life ; but his was now
 The still contentedness of seventy years.
 Calm did he sit under the wide-spread tree ¹
 Of his old age : and yet less calm and meek,
 Winningly meek or venerably calm,
 Than slow and torpid ; paying in this wise
 A penalty, if penalty it were,
 For spendthrift feats, excesses of his prime.
 I loved the old Man, for I pitied him !
 A task it was, I own, to hold discourse
 With one so slow in gathering up his thoughts,
 But he was a cheap pleasure to my eyes ;
 Mild, inoffensive, ready in *his* way,
 And helpful to his utmost power :² and there
 Our housewife knew full well what she possessed !
 He was her vassal of all labour, tilled
 Her garden, from the pasture fetched her kine ;
 And, one among the orderly array
 Of hay-makers, beneath the burning sun
 Maintained his place ; or heedfully pursued
 His course, on errands bound, to other vales,
 Leading sometimes an inexperienced child
 Too young for any profitable task.
 So moved he like a shadow that performed
 Substantial service.* Mark me now, and learn

¹ 1836.

. beneath the wide-spread tree

1814.

² 1827.

And useful to his utmost power : . . .

1814.

* “The account given by the ‘Solitary,’ towards the close of the second book, in all that belongs to the character of the old man, was taken from a Grasmere pauper, who was boarded in the last house quitting the Vale on the road to Ambleside” (I. F. MS.).—ED.

For what reward!—The moon her monthly round
 Hath not completed since our dame, the queen
 Of this one cottage and this lonely dale,
 Into my little sanctuary rushed—
 Voice to a rueful treble humanized,
 And features in deplorable dismay.
 I treat the matter lightly, but, alas!
 It is most serious: persevering rain¹
 Had fallen in torrents; all the mountain tops
 Were hidden, and black vapours coursed their sides;
 This had I seen, and saw; but, till she spake,
 Was wholly ignorant that my ancient Friend—
 Who at her bidding, early and alone,
 Had clomb aloft to delve the moorland turf²
 For winter fuel—to his noontide meal
 Returned not, and now, haply, on the heights³
 Lay at the mercy of this raging storm.
 ‘Inhuman!’—said I, ‘was an old Man’s life
 Not worth the trouble of a thought?—alas!
 This notice comes too late.’ With joy I saw
 Her husband enter—from a distant vale.
 We sallied forth together; found the tools
 Which the neglected veteran had dropped,
 But through all quarters looked for him in vain.
 We shouted—but no answer! Darkness fell
 Without remission of the blast or shower,
 And fears for our own safety drove us home.

I, who weep little, did, I will confess,

¹ 1827.

. from mid-noon the rain 1814.

² 1827.

. the mountain turf 1814.

³ 1827.

Came not, and now perchance upon the Heights 1814.

The moment I was seated here alone,
 Honour my little cell with some few tears
 Which anger and resentment¹ could not dry.
 All night the storm endured; and, soon as help
 Had been collected from the neighbouring vale,
 With morning we renewed our quest: the wind
 Was fallen, the rain abated, but the hills
 Lay shrouded in impenetrable mist;
 And long and hopelessly we sought in vain:
 'Till, chancing on that lofty ridge to pass²
 A heap of ruin—almost without walls
 And wholly without roof (the bleached remains
 Of a small chapel, where, in ancient time,
 The peasants of these lonely valleys used
 To meet for worship on that central height)
 We there espied the object of our search,³
 Lying full three parts buried among tufts
 Of heath-plant, under and above him strewn,
 To baffle, as he might, the watery storm:
 And there we found him breathing peaceably,
 Snug as a child that hides itself in sport
 'Mid a green hay-cock in a sunny field.
 We spake—he made reply, but would not stir

¹ 1827.

Which anger or resentment 1814.

² 1827.

Till, chancing by yon lofty ridge to pass 1814.

³ 1827.

And wholly without roof (in ancient time
 It was a Chapel, a small Edifice
 In which the Peasants of these lonely Dells
 For worship met upon that central height)—
 Chancing to pass this wreck of stones, we there
 Espied at last the Object of our search,
 Couched in a nook, and seemingly alive.
 It would have moved you, had you seen the guise
 In which he occupied his chosen bed,

1814.

At our entreaty ; less from want of power
Than apprehension and bewildering thoughts.

So was he lifted gently from the ground,
And with their freight homeward the shepherds moved¹

¹ 1836.

the Shepherds homeward moved 1814.

* “The character of the hostess, and all that befell the poor man upon the mountain, belongs to Paterdale. The woman I knew well ; her name was Ruth Jackson, and she was exactly such a person as I describe. The ruins of the old chapel, among which the old man was found lying, may yet be traced, and stood upon the ridge that divides Paterdale from Boar-dale and Martindale, having been placed there for the convenience of both districts” (I. F. MS.).

The following is Miss Wordsworth’s account of the same occurrence, given in a record of what she called “a mountainous ramble,” written in 1805. The poet afterwards incorporated this passage, with a few alterations, in his *Description of the Scenery of the Lakes*. (For further details, see the Life in the last volume.)

“Looked into Boar Dale above Sanwick—deep and bare, a stream winding down it. After having walked a considerable way on the tops of the hills, came in view of Glenridding and the mountains above Grisdale. Luff then took us aside, before we had begun to descend, to a small ruin, which was formerly a chapel or place of worship where the inhabitants of Martindale and Paterdale were accustomed to meet on Sundays. There are now no traces by which you could discover that the building had been different from a common sheepfold ; the loose stones and the few which yet remain piled up are the same as those which lie about on the mountain ; but the shape of the building being oblong is not that of a common sheepfold, and it stands east and west. Whether it was ever consecrated ground or not I know not ; but the place may be kept holy in the memory of some now living in Paterdale ; for it was the means of preserving the life of a poor old man last summer, who, having gone up the mountain to gather peats, had been overtaken by a storm, and could not find his way down again. He happened to be near the remains of the old chapel, and, in a corner of it, he contrived, by laying turf and ling and stones from one wall to the other, to make a shelter from the wind, and there he lay all night. The woman who had sent him on his errand began to grow uneasy towards night, and the neighbours went out to seek him. At that time the old man had housed himself in his nest, and he heard the voices of the men, but could not make *them* hear, the wind being so loud, and he was afraid to leave the spot lest he should not be able to find it again, so he remained there all night ; and they returned to their homes, giving him up for lost ; but the next morning the same persons discovered him huddled up in the sheltered nook. He was at first stupefied and unable to move ; but after he had eaten and drunk, and recollected himself a little, he walked down the mountain, and did not afterwards seem to have suffered.”—ED.

Through the dull mist, I following—when a step,
 A single step, that freed me from the skirts
 Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
 Glory beyond all glory ever seen
 By waking sense or by the dreaming soul !
 The appearance,¹ instantaneously disclosed,
 Was of a mighty city—boldly say
 A wilderness of building, sinking far
 And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,²
 Far sinking into splendor—without end !
 Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
 With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
 And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
 Uplifted ; here, serene pavilions bright,
 In avenues disposed ; there, towers begirt
 With battlements that on their restless fronts
 Bore stars—illumination of all gems !
 By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
 Upon the dark materials of the storm
 Now pacified ; on them, and on the coves
 And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
 The vapours had receded, taking there
 Their station under a cerulean sky.
 Oh, 'twas an unimaginable sight !
 Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald turf,
 Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
 Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,

¹ 1827.

Soul !

—Though I am conscious that no power of words
 Can body forth, no hues of speech can paint
 That gorgeous spectacle—too bright and fair
 Even for remembrance ; yet the attempt may give
 Collateral interest to this homely Tale.

The Appearance,

1814.

² 1849.

into a wondrous depth,

1814.

Molten together, and composing thus,
 Each lost in each, that marvellous array
 Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
 Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
 In fleecy folds voluminous, enwrapped.
 Right in the midst, where interspace appeared
 Of open court, an object like a throne
 Under¹ a shining canopy of state
 Stood fixed; and fixed resemblances were seen
 To implements of ordinary use,
 But vast in size, in substance glorified;
 Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
 In vision*—forms uncouth of mightiest power
 For admiration and mysterious awe.
 This little Vale, a dwelling-place of Man,²
 Lay low beneath my feet; 'twas visible—
 I saw not, but I felt that it was there.
 That which I *saw* was the revealed abode
 Of Spirits in beatitude: my heart
 Swelled in my breast—'I have been dead,' I cried,
 'And now I live! Oh! wherefore *do* I live?'
 And with that pang I prayed to be no more!—
 —But I forget our Charge, as utterly
 I then forgot him:—there I stood and gazed:
 The apparition faded not away,
 And I descended.†

¹ 1836.

Beneath 1814.

² 1849.

Below me was the earth; this little Vale 1814.

* Compare Ezekiel, chap. i.—Ed.

† "The glorious appearance disclosed above and among the mountains was described partly from what my friend, Mr Luff, who then lived in Paterdale, witnessed upon this melancholy occasion, and partly from what Mrs Wordsworth and I had seen, in company with Sir G. and Lady Beau-

Having reached the house,
 I found its rescued inmate safely lodged,
 And in serene possession of himself,
 Beside a fire whose genial warmth seemed met
 By a faint shining from the heart, a gleam
 Of comfort, spread over his pallid face.¹
 Great show of joy the housewife made, and truly
 Was glad to find her conscience set at ease ;
 And not less glad, for sake of her good name,
 That the poor Sufferer had escaped with life.
 But, though he seemed at first to have received
 No harm, and uncomplaining as before
 Went through his usual tasks, a silent change
 Soon showed itself: he lingered three short weeks ;
 And from the cottage hath been borne to-day.

So ends my dolorous tale, and glad I am
 That it is ended." At these words he turned—
 And, with blithe air of open fellowship,
 Brought from the cupboard wine and stouter cheer,
 Like one who would be merry. Seeing this,
 My grey-haired Friend said courteously—"Nay, nay,
 You have regaled us as a hermit ought ;
 Now let us forth into the sun!"—Our Host
 Rose, though reluctantly, and forth we went.

¹ 1836.

Beside a genial fire ; that seemed to spread
 A gleam of comfort o'er his pallid face.

1814.

mont, above Hartshope Hall, in our way from Paterdale to Ambleside" (I. F. MS.).

Compare this with the account of the view from the top of Snowdon, at the beginning of the Fourteenth Book of *The Prelude* (Vol. III. p. 389-90), and see Charles Lamb's remark in Note H, Appendix to this volume.—ED.

Book Third.

DESPONDENCY.

ARGUMENT.

Images in the Valley—Another Recess in it entered and described—Wanderer's sensations—Solitary's excited by the same objects—Contrast between these—Despondency of the Solitary gently reproved—Conversation exhibiting the Solitary's past and present opinions and feelings, till he enters upon his own History at length—His domestic felicity—Afflictions—Dejection—Roused by the French Revolution—Disappointment and disgust—Voyage to America—Disappointment and disgust pursue him—His return—His languor and depression of mind, from want of faith in the great truths of Religion, and want of confidence in the virtue of Mankind.

A HUMMING BEE—a little tinkling rill—
 A pair of falcons wheeling on the wing,
 In clamorous agitation, round the crest
 Of a tall rock, their airy citadel—
 By each and all of these the pensive ear
 Was greeted, in the silence that ensued,
 When through the cottage threshold we had passed,
 And, deep within that lonesome valley, stood
 Once more beneath the concave of a blue¹
 And cloudless sky. Anon exclaimed our Host,—
 Triumphantly dispersing with the taunt
 The shade of discontent which on his brow
 Had gathered,—“Ye have left my cell, but see
 How Nature hems you in with friendly arms!
 And by her help ye are my prisoners still.
 But which way shall I lead you? how contrive,
 In spot so parsimoniously endowed,
 That the brief hours, which yet remain, may reap
 Some recompense of knowledge or delight?”
 So saying, round he looked, as if perplexed;

¹ 1827.

And, to remove those doubts, my grey-haired Friend
 Said, "Shall we take this pathway for our guide?—
 Upward it winds, as if, in summer heats,
 Its line had first been fashioned by the flock
 Seeking a place of refuge at the root¹
 Of yon black Yew-tree, whose protruded boughs
 Darken the silver bosom of the crag,*
 From which she draws her meagre sustenance.²
 There in commodious shelter may we rest.
 Or let us trace this streamlet to its source;³
 Feebly it tinkles with an earthy sound,
 And a few steps may bring us to the spot
 Where, haply, crowned with flowerets and green herbs,
 The mountain infant to the sun comes forth,
 Like human life from darkness."—A quick turn⁴
 Through a strait passage of encumbered ground,
 Proved that such hope was vain:—for now we stood
 Shut out from prospect of the open vale,
 And saw the water, that composed this rill,
 Descending, disembodied, and diffused
 O'er the smooth surface of an ample crag,
 Lofty, and steep, and naked as a tower.
 All further progress here was barred;—And who
 Thought I, if master of a vacant hour,
 Here would not linger, willingly detained?

¹ 1836.

A place of refuge seeking at the root

1814.

² 1827.

From which it draws its meagre sustenance.

1814.

³ 1832.

. to his source

1814.

⁴ 1827.

. darkness."—At the word

We followed where he led:—a sudden turn

1814.

* There is still a single "yew-tree" high up the eastern side of the valley on the face of Lingmoor Fell,

"Darkening the silver bosom of the crag."

—ED.

Whether to such wild objects he were led
 When copious rains have magnified the stream
 Into a loud and white-robed waterfall,
 Or introduced at this more quiet time.

Upon a semicirque of turf-clad ground,
 The hidden nook discovered to our view
 A mass of rock, resembling, as it lay
 Right at the foot of that moist precipice,
 A stranded ship, with keel upturned, that rests
 Fearless of winds and waves. Three several stones
 Stood near, of smaller size, and not unlike
 To monumental pillars : and, from these
 Some little space disjoined, a pair were seen,
 That with united shoulders bore aloft
 A fragment, like an altar, flat and smooth :
 Barren the tablet, yet thereon appeared¹
 A tall and shining holly, that had found²
 A hospitable chink, and stood upright,
 As if inserted by some human hand
 In mockery, to wither in the sun,
 Or lay its beauty flat before a breeze,
 The first that entered. But no breeze did now
 Find entrance ;—high or low appeared no trace
 Of motion, save the water that descended,
 Diffused adown that barrier of steep rock,
 And softly creeping, like a breath of air,
 Such as is sometimes seen, and hardly seen,
 To brush the still breast of a crystal lake.*

¹ 1827.

. Yet thereon appeared
 Conspicuously stationed, one fair Plant,

1814.

² 1832.

. which had found

1814.

* The local allusions in this passage, and in what follows, are most

“Behold a cabinet for sages built,
Which kings might envy !”—Praise to this effect
Broke from the happy old Man’s reverend lip ;
Who to the Solitary turned, and said,
“In sooth, with love’s familiar privilege,
You have decried the wealth which is your own.¹
Among these rocks and stones, methinks, I see

¹ 1827.

You have decried, in no unseemly terms
Of modesty, that wealth which is your own.

1814.

exact and literal. The three men are supposed to leave the cottage, and to cross to the west side of the tarn, just a little to the north of the fir-wood which overshadows it. The “barrier of steep rock” is the low perpendicular crag to the west of the tarn, immediately below the fir-wood, and the “semicirque of turf-clad ground” is apparent at a glance, whether seen from below the rock or from above it. There are many fragments of ice-borne rock, high up the flank of Blake Rigg to the west, and on the slopes of Lingmoor to the east, which might at first sight be mistaken for the stone, like

“A stranded ship, with keel upturned, that rests
Fearless of winds and waves,”

or the

“fragment, like an altar ;”

but this particular mass of rock lay

“Right at the foot of that moist precipice,”

and there it still lies, obvious enough even to the casual eye. The “semicirque” is the cup-shaped recess between the fir-wood and the cliff ; and on entering it, the mass of rock is seen lying north-west to north-east. It is not ice-borne, but a fragment dislodged from the crag above it. It is now broken into three smaller fragments, by the weathering of many years. Cracked probably when it fell, the rents have widened, and the fragments are separated by the frosts of many winters. A sycamore of average size is now growing at its side ; its root being in the cleft, where the stone is broken. Holly grows luxuriantly all along the face of the crag above ; so that the existence of the bush, described as growing in the stone which resembled an altar, is easily explained. The brook is a short one, flowing through the meadow-pastures of the wood, and after a hundred yards is lost in the turfy slope, but is seen again upon the face of the “moist precipice,” “softly creeping”—precisely as described in the poem. The “three several stones” that “stand near” are, I think, the one to the front, in a line with the keel of the ship ; and the other two to the right and left respectively. The “pair,” with the “fragment like an altar, flat and smooth,” are to the left, and close at hand.—ED.

More than the heedless impress that belongs
 To lonely nature's casual work: they bear
 A semblance strange of power intelligent,
 And of design not wholly worn away.
 Boldest of plants that ever faced the wind,
 How gracefully that slender shrub looks forth
 From its fantastic birth-place! And I own,
 Some shadowy intimations haunt me here,
 That in these shows¹ a chronicle survives
 Of purposes akin to those of Man,*
 But wrought with mightier arm than now pre s.
 —Voiceless the stream descends into the gulf
 With timid lapse;—and lo! while in this strait
 I stand—the chasm of sky above my head
 Is heaven's profoundest azure; no domain
 For fickle, short-lived clouds to occupy,

1827.

I cannot but incline to a belief

That in these shows

1814.

* Lady Richardson writes thus of a visit Wordsworth paid to Lancrigg in 1841:—"We took a walk on the terrace, and he went as usual to his favourite points. On our return he was struck with the berries on the holly tree, and said, 'Why should not you and I go and pull some berries from the other side of the tree, which is not seen from the window? and then we can go and plant them in the rocky ground behind the house.' We pulled the berries, and set forth with our tools. I made the holes, and the poet put in the berries. He was as earnest and eager about it as if it had been a matter of importance, and, as he put the seeds in, he every now and then muttered, in his low, solemn tone, that beautiful verse from Burns' *Vision*:—

“ ‘And wear thou this, she solemn said,
 And bound the holly round my head.
 The polished leaves, and berries red,
 Did rustling play;
 And like a passing thought, she fled
 In light away.’

He clambered to the highest rocks in the 'Tom Intak,' and put in the berries in such situations as Nature sometimes does, with such true and beautiful effect. He said, 'I like to do this for posterity.'”—ED.

Or to pass through ; but rather an abyss
 In which the everlasting stars abide ;
 And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth, might tempt
 The curious eye to look for them by day.*
 —Hail Contemplation ! from the stately towers,
 Reared by the industrious hand of human art
 To lift thee high above the misty air
 And turbulence of murmuring cities vast ;
 From academic groves, that have for thee
 Been planted, hither come and find a lodge
 To which thou mayst resort for holier peace,—
 From whose calm centre thou, through height or depth,
 Mayst penetrate, wherever truth shall lead ;
 Measuring through all degrees, until the scale
 Of time and conscious nature disappear,
 Lost in unsearchable eternity !” †

A pause ensued ; and with minuter care
 We scanned the various features of the scene :
 And soon the Tenant of that lonely vale
 With courteous voice thus spake—

“ I should have grieved
 Hereafter, not escaping self-reproach,¹
 If from my poor retirement ye had gone
 Leaving this nook unvisited : but, in sooth,
 Your unexpected presence had so roused
 My spirits, that they were bent on enterprise ;

¹ 1827.

Hereafter, should perhaps have blamed myself, 1814.

“ Voiceless the stream descends,
 With timid lapse”

is a perfect description of this tiniest and gentlest of rills, flowing through the meadow-grass ; while the “chasm of sky above,” of which the Wanderer speaks, though an obvious exaggeration, is more appropriate to this spot than to any other in the vale.—Ed.

† See Wordsworth’s note, p. 396.—Ed.

And, like an ardent hunter, I forgot,
 Or, shall I say?—disdained, the game that lurks¹
 At my own door. The shapes before our eyes,
 And their arrangement, doubtless must be deemed
 The sport of Nature, aided by blind Chance
 Rudely to mock the works of toiling Man.
 And hence, this upright shaft of unhewn stone,
 From Fancy, willing to set off her stores
 By sounding titles, hath acquired the name
 Of Pompey's pillar; that I gravely style
 My Theban obelisk; and, there, behold
 A Druid cromlech!—thus I entertain
 The antiquarian humour, and am pleased
 To skim along the surfaces of things,
 Beguiling harmlessly the listless hours.
 But if the spirit be oppressed by sense
 Of instability, revolt, decay,
 And change, and emptiness, these freaks of Nature
 And her blind helper Chance, do *then* suffice
 To quicken, and to aggravate—to feed
 Pity and scorn, and melancholy pride,
 Not less than that huge Pile (from some abyss
 Of mortal power unquestionably sprung) *
 Whose hoary diadem of pendent rocks
 Confines the shrill-voiced whirlwind, round and round

¹ 1827.

. that lurked

1814.

* Stonehenge. Old legends gave it a mythic origin. Geoffrey of Monmouth attributed it to Merlin, the stones having been brought over from Ireland by magic. It was not a Druid Temple, but a Saxon ring, set up—after the Romans had left Britain—for parliamentary and coronation purposes. “Roman pottery and coins have been found under the stones, and they are fitted with mortice and tenon, an art unknown in Britain till it was taught by the Romans.” Compare Dryden's *Epistle to Dr Charleton*—

“Stonehenge, once thought a temple, you have found
 A throne where kings, our earthly gods, were crowned.”—Ep. II.
 —Ed.

Eddying within its vast circumference,
 On Sarum's naked plain—than pyramid
 Of Egypt, unsubverted, undissolved—
 Or Syria's marble ruins towering high
 Above the sandy desert, in the light
 Of sun or moon.—Forgive me, if I say
 That an appearance which hath raised your minds
 To an exalted pitch (the self-same cause
 Different effect producing) is for me
 Fraught rather with depression than delight,
 Though shame it were, could I not look around,¹
 By the reflection of your pleasure, pleased.
 Yet happier in my judgment, even than you
 With your bright transports fairly may be deemed,
 The wandering Herbalist,²—who, clear alike
 From vain, and, that worse evil, vexing thoughts,
 Casts, if he ever chance to enter here,
 Upon these uncouth Forms³ a slight regard
 Of transitory interest, and peeps round
 For some rare floweret of the hills, or plant
 Of craggy fountain; what he hopes for wins,
 Or learns, at least, that 'tis not to be won:
 Then, keen and eager, as a fine-nosed hound
 By soul-engrossing instinct driven along
 Through wood or open field, the harmless Man
 Departs, intent upon his onward quest!—
 Nor is that Fellow-wanderer, so deem I,

¹ 1827.

. look around me,

1814.

² 1827.

Is He (if such have ever entered here)

The wandering Herbalist;

1814

³ 1827.

., vexing thoughts,

Casts on these uncouth Forms

1814.

* This must refer to Palmyra. The Baalbec ruins are, for the most part, not marble, but limestone.—Ed.

Less to be envied, (you may trace him oft
 By scars which his activity has left
 Beside our roads and pathways, though, thank Heaven !
 This covert nook reports not of his hand)
 He who with pocket-hammer smites the edge
 Of luckless rock or prominent stone, disguised
 In weather-stains or crusted o'er by Nature
 With her first growths,¹ detaching by the stroke
 A chip or splinter—to resolve his doubts ;
 And, with that ready answer satisfied,
 The substance classes by some barbarous name,
 And hurries on ;² or from the fragments picks
 His specimen, if but haply interveined³
 With sparkling mineral, or should crystal cube
 Lurk in its cells—and thinks himself enriched,
 Wealthier, and doubtless wiser, than before !
 Intrusted safely each to his pursuit,
 Earnest alike, let both from hill to hill
 Range ;⁴ if it please them, speed from clime to clime ;
 The mind is full—and free from pain their pastime.”⁵

“ Then,” said I, interposing, “ One is near,
 Who cannot but possess in your esteem
 Place worthier still of envy. May I name,

¹ 1827.

Of every luckless rock or stone that stands
 Before his sight, by weather-stains disguised,
 Or crusted o'er with vegetation thin,
 Nature's first growth, 1814.

² 1827.

Doth to the substance give some barbarous name,
 Then hurries on ; 1814.

³ 1845.

. if haply interveined 1814.

⁴ 1827.

This earnest Pair may range from hill to hill,
 And, 1814

⁵ 1849.

. no pain is in their sport. 1814.

Without offence, that fair-faced cottage-boy ?
 Dame Nature's pupil of the lowest form,
 Youngest apprentice in the school of art !
 Him, as we entered from the open glen,
 You might have noticed, busily engaged,
 Heart, soul, and hands,—in mending the defects
 Left in the fabric of a leaky dam
 Raised¹ for enabling this penurious stream
 To turn a slender mill (that new-made plaything)
 For his delight—the happiest he of all !”

“Far happiest,” answered the desponding Man,
 “If, such as now he is, he might remain !
 Ah ! what avails imagination high
 Or question deep ? what profits all that earth,
 Or heaven's blue vault, is suffered to put forth
 Of impulse or allurements, for the Soul
 To quit the beaten track of life, and soar
 Far as she finds a yielding element
 In past or future ; far as she can go
 Through time or space—if neither in the one,
 Nor in the other region, nor in aught
 That Fancy, dreaming o'er the map of things,
 Hath placed beyond these penetrable bounds,
 Words of assurance can be heard ; if nowhere
 A habitation, for consummate good,
 Or for² progressive virtue, by the search
 Can be attained,—a better sanctuary
 From doubt and sorrow, than the senseless grave ?”

“Is this,” the grey-haired Wanderer mildly said,
 “The voice, which we so lately overheard,

¹ 1827.

Framed 1814.

² 1814.

Nor for 1827.

1845 returns to 1814.

To that same child, addressing tenderly
 The consolations of a hopeful mind ?
 ‘*His body is at rest, his soul in heaven.*’
 These were your words ; and, verily, methinks
 Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop
 Than when we soar.”—

The Other, not displeased,

Promptly replied—“ My notion is the same.
 And I, without reluctance, could decline
 All act of inquisition whence we rise,
 And what, when breath hath ceased, we may become.
 Here are we, in a bright and breathing world.
 Our origin, what matters it ? In lack
 Of worthier explanation, say at once
 With the American (a thought which suits
 The place where now we stand) that certain men
 Leapt out together from a rocky cave ;*
 And these were the first parents of mankind :
 Or, if a different image be recalled
 By the warm sunshine, and the jocund voice
 Of insects chirping out their careless lives
 On these soft beds of thyme-besprinkled turf,
 Choose, with the gay Athenian, a conceit
 As sound—blithe race ! whose mantles were bedecked
 With golden grasshoppers,† in sign that they
 Had sprung, like those bright creatures, from the soil
 Whereon their endless generations dwelt.¹

¹ 1827.

As sound ; with that blithe race who wore erewhile
 Their golden Grasshoppers, in sign that they
 Had sprung from out the soil whereon they dwelt

1814.

* The Navagos and several other American tribes have this legend ; but see Note D. in the Appendix to this volume.—ED.

† Before the time of Solon, the Athenians wore golden *τέττιγες*—probably either brooches, or pins with a golden cicada for the head—as a sign that they considered themselves *αὐτοχθόνες*, since the grasshopper *τέττιξ* (cicada) was supposed to spring out of the ground.—ED.

But stop!—these theoretic fancies jar
 On serious minds: then, as the Hindoos draw¹
 Their holy Ganges from a skiey fount,*
 Even so deduce the stream of human life
 From seats of power divine; and hope, or trust,
 That our existence winds her stately course²
 Beneath the sun, like Ganges, to make part
 Of a living ocean; or, to sink engulfed,³
 Like Niger,† in impenetrable sands
 And utter darkness: thought which may be faced,
 Though comfortless!—

Not of myself I speak ;

Such acquiescence neither doth imply,
 In me, a meekly-bending spirit soothed
 By natural piety; nor a lofty mind,
 By philosophic discipline prepared
 For calm subjection to acknowledged law;
 Pleased to have been, contented not to be.
 Such palms I boast not; no!—to me, who find,
 Reviewing my past way, much to condemn,
 Little to praise, and nothing to regret,
 (Save some remembrances of dream-like joys
 That scarcely seem to have belonged to me)
 If I must take my choice between the pair

¹ 1827.

On serious minds; for doubtless, in one sense,
 The theme is serious; then, as Hindoos draw

1814.

² 1827.

. winds its stately course

1814.

³ 1827.

Of a living ocean: or, if such may seem
 Its tendency to be engulfed and lost

1814.

* The Ganges—sacred river of India—rising in the snow-clad Himalaya, was believed to have a celestial origin.—ED.

† The great river of Western Africa, which was supposed, until recent geographical discovery, to lose itself in the sand.—ED.

That rule alternately the weary hours,
 Night is than day more acceptable ; sleep
 Doth, in my estimate of good, appear
 A better state than waking ; death than sleep :
 Feelingly sweet is stillness after storm,
 Though under covert of the wormy ground !

Yet be it said, in justice to myself,
 That in more genial times, when I was free
 To explore the destiny of human kind
 (Not as an intellectual game pursued
 With curious subtilty, from wish to cheat¹
 Irksome sensations : but by love of truth
 Urged on, or haply by intense delight
 In feeding thought, wherever thought could feed)
 I did not rank with those (too dull or nice,
 For to my judgment such they then appeared,
 Or too aspiring, thankless at the best)
 Who, in this frame of human life, perceive
 An object whereunto their souls are tied
 In discontented wedlock ; nor did e'er,
 From me, those dark impervious shades, that hang
 Upon the region whither we are bound,
 Exclude a power to enjoy the vital beams
 Of present sunshine.—Deities that float
 On wings, angelic Spirits ! I could muse
 O'er what from eldest time we have been told
 Of your bright forms and glorious faculties,
 And with the imagination rest content,²
 Not wishing more ; repining not to tread
 The little sinuous path of earthly care,

¹ 1827.

thereby to cheat

1814.

² 1849.

be content

1814.

By flowers embellished, and by springs refreshed.¹
 —‘ Blow winds of autumn !—let your chilling breath
 Take the live herbage from the mead, and strip
 The shady forest of its green attire,—
 And let the bursting clouds to fury rouse
 The gentle brooks !—Your desolating sway,
 Sheds,’ I exclaimed, ‘ no sadness upon me,²
 And no disorder in your rage I find.
 What dignity, what beauty, in this change
 From mild to angry, and from sad to gay,
 Alternate and revolving ! How benign,
 How rich in animation and delight,
 How bountiful these elements—compared
 With aught, as more desirable and fair,
 Devised by fancy for the golden age ;
 Or the perpetual warbling that prevails
 In Arcady* beneath unaltered skies,
 Through the long year in constant quiet bound,
 Night hushed as night, and day serene as day !’
 —But why this tedious record ?—Age, we know,
 Is garrulous ; and solitude is apt
 To anticipate the privilege of Age.
 From far ye come ; and surely with a hope
 Of better entertainment:—let us hence !”

Loth to forsake the spot, and still more loth

¹ 1814-1849.

Embellished by sweet flowers, by springs refreshed. c.

² 1836.

Thus I exclaimed, ‘ no sadness sheds on me, 1814.

* Compare *The Prelude*, Book VIII. (Vol. III., p. 287). Also *In Memoriam*, St. XXXIII.—

“ And round us all the thicket rang
 To many a flute of Arcady.”

To be diverted from our present theme,
 I said, "My thoughts, agreeing, Sir, with yours,
 Would push this censure farther ;—for, if smiles
 Of scornful pity be the just reward
 Of Poesy thus courteously employed
 In framing models to improve the scheme
 Of Man's existence, and recast the world,
 Why should not grave Philosophy be styled,
 Herself, a dreamer of a kindred stock,
 A dreamer yet more spiritless and dull ?
 Yes, shall the fine immunities she boasts¹
 Establish sounder titles of esteem
 For her, who (all too timid and reserved
 For onset, for resistance too inert,
 Too weak for suffering, and for hope too tame)
 Placed, among flowery gardens² curtained round
 With world-excluding groves, the brotherhood
 Of soft Epicureans,* taught—if they
 The ends of being would secure, and win
 The crown of wisdom—to yield up their souls
 To a voluptuous unconcern, preferring
 Tranquillity to all things. Or is she,"

¹ 1827.

Yes," said I, "shall the immunities to which
 She doth lay claim, the precepts she bestows,

1814.

² 1827.

Did place, in flowery Gardens . . .

1814.

* The end sought by Epicurus, the *summum bonum* of the Epicurean school, was *ἀταραξία*, repose or peace of mind. This was to be obtained by freedom, from pain of body or distraction of mind ; but it consisted in the harmony, or equilibrium that resulted, when disturbing influences were withdrawn. To attain to it, little was needed—mental enjoyments being superior to bodily ones, and the social joys of friendship the highest of all. Public life was renounced, and private friendship became the bond of union amongst the members of the Epicurean confraternity : but the root principle of the system was emotional, not intellectual.—ED.

I cried, "more worthy of regard, the Power,
Who, for the sake of sterner quiet, closed
The Stoic's * heart against the vain approach
Of admiration, and all sense of joy?"

His countenance gave notice that my zeal
Accorded little with his present mind ;
I ceased, and he resumed.—" Ah ! gentle Sir,
Slight, if you will, the *means* ; but spare to slight
The *end* of those, who did, by system, rank,
As the prime object of a wise man's aim,
Security from shock of accident,
Release from fear ; and cherished peaceful days
For their own sakes, as mortal life's chief good,
And only reasonable felicity.
What motive drew, what impulse, I would ask,
Through a long course of later ages, drove
The hermit to his cell in forest wide ;
Or what detained him, till his closing eyes
Took their last farewell of the sun and stars,
Fast anchored in the desert ?—Not alone
Dread of the persecuting sword, remorse,
Wrongs unredressed, or insults unavenged
And unavengable, defeated pride,
Prosperity subverted, maddening want,
Friendship betrayed, affection unreturned,

* Rational self-control being regarded as the chief good by the Stoics, the emotion of happiness was looked upon as an interruption of the equilibrium in which the wise man should live. All the emotions were diseases, or disturbances of human nature less or more. They had therefore to be uprooted, rather than regulated : and virtue consisted in being emotionless, passionless, apathetic, with life conformed to the laws of the pure reason, so that one came to be

A reasoning self-sufficient thing,
An intellectual all-in-all.

Love with despair, or grief in agony ;—
Not always from intolerable pangs
He fled ; but, compassed round by pleasure, sighed
For independent happiness ; craving peace,
The central feeling of all happiness,
Not as a refuge from distress or pain,
A breathing-time, vacation, or a truce,
But for its absolute self ; a life of peace,
Stability without regret or fear ;
That hath been, is, and shall be evermore !—
Such the reward he sought ; and wore out life,
There, where on few external things his heart
Was set, and those his own ; or, if not his,
Subsisting under nature's steadfast law.

What other yearning was the master tie
Of the monastic brotherhood, upon rock
Ærial, or in green secluded vale,
One after one, collected from afar,
An undissolving fellowship ?—What but this,
The universal instinct of repose,
The longing for confirmed tranquillity,
Inward and outward ; humble, yet sublime :
The life where hope and memory are as one ;
Where earth is quiet and her face unchanged
Save by the simplest toil of human hands
Or seasons' difference ; the immortal Soul ¹
Consistent in self-rule ; and heaven revealed
To meditation in that quietness !—
Such was their scheme : and though the wished-for end
By multitudes was missed, perhaps attained

¹ 1849.

By none, they for the attempt, and pains employed,¹
 Do, in my present censure, stand redeemed
 From the unqualified disdain, that once
 Would have been cast upon them by my voice
 Delivering her decisions² from the seat
 Of forward youth—that scruples not to solve
 Doubts, and determine questions, by the rules
 Of inexperienced judgment, ever prone
 To overweening faith; and is inflamed,
 By courage, to demand from real life
 The test of act and suffering, to provoke
 Hostility—how dreadful when it comes,
 Whether affliction be the foe, or guilt!

A child of earth, I rested, in that stage
 Of my past course to which these thoughts advert,
 Upon earth's native energies; forgetting
 That mine was a condition which required
 Nor energy, nor fortitude—a calm
 Without vicissitude; which, if the like
 Had been presented to my view elsewhere,
 I might have even been tempted to despise.
 But no—for the serene was also bright;³
 Enlivened happiness with joy o'erflowing,
 With joy, and—oh! that memory should survive
 To speak the word—with rapture! Nature's boon,
 Life's genuine inspiration, happiness

¹ 1849.

Such was their scheme :—thrice happy he who gained
 The end proposed! and,—though the same were missed
 By multitudes, perhaps obtained by none,—
 They, for the attempt, and for the pains employed, 1814.

² 1832.

Delivering its decisions 1814.

³ 1836.

But that which was serene was also bright; 1814.

Above what rules can teach, or fancy feign ;
Abused, as all possessions *are* abused
That are not prized according to their worth.
And yet, what worth ? what good is given to men,
More solid than the gilded clouds of heaven ?
What joy more lasting than a vernal flower ?
None ! 'tis the general plaint of human kind
In solitude : and mutually addressed
From each to all, for wisdom's sake :—This truth
The priest announces from his holy seat :
And, crowned with garlands in the summer grove,
The poet fits it to his pensive lyre.
Yet, ere that final resting-place be gained,
Sharp contradictions may arise, by doom
Of this same life, compelling us to grieve¹
That the prosperities of love and joy
Should be permitted, oft-times, to endure
So long, and be at once cast down for ever.
Oh ! tremble, ye, to whom hath been assigned
A course of days composing happy months,
And they as happy years ; the present still
So like the past, and both so firm a pledge
Of a congenial future, that the wheels
Of pleasure move without the aid of hope :
For Mutability is Nature's bane ;
And slighted Hope *will* be avenged : and, when
Ye need her favours, ye shall find her not ;
But in her stead—fear—doubt—and agony !”

This was the bitter language of the heart :
But, while he spake, look, gesture, tone of voice,

¹ 1827.

Sharp contradictions hourly shall arise
To cross the way ; and we, perchance, by doom
Of this same life, shall be compelled to grieve

Though discomposed and vehement, were such
 As skill and graceful nature might suggest
 To a proficient of the tragic scene
 Standing before the multitude, beset
 With dark events. Desirous to divert¹
 Or stem the current of the speaker's thoughts,
 We signified a wish to leave that place
 Of stillness and close privacy, a nook
 That seemed² for self-examination made;
 Or, for confession, in the sinner's need,
 Hidden from all men's view. To our attempt
 He yielded not; but, pointing to a slope
 Of mossy turf defended from the sun,
 And on that couch inviting us to rest,
 Full on that³ tender-hearted Man he turned
 A serious eye, and his speech thus renewed.⁴

"You never saw, your eyes did never look
 On the bright form of Her whom once I loved:—
 Her silver voice was heard upon the earth,
 A sound unknown to you; else, honoured Friend!
 Your heart had borne a pitiable share
 Of what I suffered, when I wept that loss,
 And suffer now, not seldom, from the thought

¹ 1827.

With sorrowful events; and we, who heard
 And saw, were moved. Desirous to divert 1814.
 Standing before the multitude, beset
 With trouble, conflict that he seeks and shuns
 With the same breath, desirous to divert. C.

² 1827.

., which seemed
 A nook for self-examination framed 1814.

³ 1827.

Towards that 1814.

⁴ 1836.

., and thus his speech renewed. 1814.

That I remember, and can weep no more.—
 Stripped as I am of all the golden fruit
 Of self-esteem; and by the cutting blasts
 Of self-reproach familiarly assailed;
 Yet would I not be¹ of such wintry bareness
 But that some leaf of your regard should hang
 Upon my naked branches:—lively thoughts
 Give birth, full often, to unguarded words;
 I grieve that, in your presence, from my tongue
 Too much of frailty hath already dropped;
 But that too much demands still more.

You know,

Revered Compatriot—and to you, kind Sir,
 (Not to be deemed a stranger, as you come
 Following the guidance of these welcome feet
 To our secluded vale) it may be told—
 That my demerits did not sue in vain
 To One on whose mild radiance many gazed
 With hope, and all with pleasure. This fair Bride—
 In the devotedness of youthful love,
 Preferring me to parents, and the choir
 Of gay companions, to the natal roof,
 And all known places and familiar sights
 (Resigned with sadness gently weighing down
 Her trembling expectations, but no more
 Than did to her due honour, and to me
 Yielded, that day, a confidence sublime
 In what I had to build upon)—this Bride,
 Young, modest, meek, and beautiful, I led
 To a low cottage in a sunny bay,
 Where the salt sea innocuously breaks,
 And the sea breeze as innocently breathes,

¹ 1836.

On Devon's leafy shores ;*—a sheltered hold,
 In a soft clime encouraging the soil
 To a luxuriant bounty !—As our steps
 Approach the embowered abode—our chosen seat—
 See, rooted in the earth, her kindly bed,¹
 The unendangered myrtle, decked with flowers,
 Before the threshold stands to welcome us !
 While, in the flowering myrtle's neighbourhood,
 Not overlooked but courting no regard,
 Those native plants, the holly and the yew,
 Gave modest intimation to the mind
 How willingly their aid they would unite²
 With the green myrtle, to endear the hours
 Of winter, and protect that pleasant place.
 —Wild were the walks upon those lonely downs,*
 Track leading into track ; how marked, how worn
 Into bright verdure, between fern and gorse
 Winding away its never ending line
 On their smooth surface, evidence was none ;
 But, there, lay open to our daily haunt,
 A range of unappropriated earth,
 Where youth's ambitious feet might move at large ;
 Whence, unmolested wanderers, we beheld
 The shining giver of the day diffuse

¹ 1827.

. its kindly bed, 1814.

² 1827.

Of willingness with which they would unite 1814.

* These are reminiscences of Wordsworth's life at Racedown and Alfoxden. His sister wrote thus of their residence at Alfoxden :—"We are three miles from Stowey, and not two miles from the sea, wherever we turn we have woods, smooth downs, and valleys with small brooks running down them, through green meadows, hardly ever intersected with hedgerows, but scattered over with trees ; the hills that cradle these valleys are either covered with fern and bilberries, or oak woods ;—walks extend for miles over the hill-tops ; the great beauty of which is their wild simplicity they are perfectly smooth without rocks."—*Memoirs*, Vol. I., p. 103.—Ed.

His brightness o'er a tract of sea and land
 Gay as our spirits, free as our desires ;
 As our enjoyments, boundless.—From those heights
 We dropped, at pleasure, into sylvan combs ;*
 Where arbours of impenetrable shade,
 And mossy seats, detained us side by side,
 With hearts at ease, and knowledge in our hearts
 ' That all the grove and all the day was ours.'

O happy time ! still happier was at hand :
 For Nature called my Partner to resign
 Her share in the pure freedom of that life,¹
 Enjoyed by us in common.—To my hope,
 To my heart's wish, my tender Mate became
 The thankful captive of maternal bonds ;
 And those wild paths were left to me alone.
 There could I meditate on follies past ;
 And, like a weary voyager escaped
 From risk and hardship, inwardly retrace
 A course of vain delights and thoughtless guilt,
 And self-indulgence—without shame pursued.
 There, undisturbed, could think of and could thank
 Her whose submissive spirit was to me
 Rule and restraint—my guardian—shall I say
 That earthly Providence, whose guiding love
 Within a port of rest had lodged me safe ;
 Safe from temptation, and from danger far ?
 Strains followed of acknowledgment addressed

¹ 1849.

But in due season Nature interfered,
 And called my partner to resign her share
 In the pure freedom of that wedded life,
 But nature called my partner to resign
 Her share in the pure freedom of that life,

1814.

1827.

* See the note on p. 126, and note K in the Appendix to this volume.
 —Ed.

To an Authority enthroned above
 The reach of sight ; from whom, as from their source,
 Proceed all visible ministers of good
 That walk the earth—Father of heaven and earth,
 Father, and king, and judge, adored and feared !
 These acts of mind, and memory, and heart,
 And spirit—interrupted and relieved
 By observations transient as the glance
 Of flying sunbeams, or to the outward form
 Cleaving with power inherent and intense,
 As the mute insect fixed upon the plant
 On whose soft leaves it hangs, and from whose cup
 It draws its nourishment imperceptibly—¹
 Endeared my wanderings ; and the mother's kiss
 And infant's smile awaited my return.

In privacy we dwelt, a wedded pair,
 Companions daily, often all day long ;
 Not placed by fortune within easy reach
 Of various intercourse, nor wishing aught
 Beyond the allowance of our own fireside,
 The twain within our happy cottage born,
 Inmates, and heirs of our united love ;
 Graced mutually by difference of sex,
 And with ² no wider interval of time
 Between their several births than served for one
 To establish something of a leader's sway ;
 Yet left them joined by sympathy in age ;
 Equals in pleasure, fellows in pursuit.

¹ 1849.

Draws imperceptibly its nourishment,—

1814.

² 1849.

. of sex,
 By the endearing names of nature bound,
 And with

1814.

On these two pillars rested as in air
Our solitude.

It soothes me to perceive,
Your courtesy withholds not from my words
Attentive audience. But, Oh! gentle Friends,
As times of quiet and unbroken peace,
Though, for a nation, times of blessedness,
Give back faint echoes from the historian's page;
So, in the imperfect sounds of this discourse,
Depressed I hear, how faithless is the voice
Which those most blissful days reverberate.
What special record can, or need, be given
To rules and habits, whereby much was done,
But all-within the sphere of little things;
Of humble, though, to us, important cares,
And precious interests? Smoothly did our life
Advance, swerving not from the path prescribed;¹
Her annual, her diurnal, round alike
Maintained with faithful care. And you divine
The worst effects that our condition saw²
If you imagine changes slowly wrought,
And in their progress unperceivable;³
Not wished for; sometimes noticed with a sigh,
(Whate'er of good or lovely they might bring)
Sighs of regret, for the familiar good
And loveliness endeared which they removed.

Seven years of occupation undisturbed
Established seemingly a right to hold

¹ 1836.

Advance, not swerving from the path prescribed; 1814.

² 1827.

. . . which our condition saw 1814.

³ 1849.

. . . imperceptible 1814.

That happiness ; and use and habit gave
 To what an alien spirit had acquired
 A patrimonial sanctity. And thus,
 With thoughts and wishes bounded to this world,
 I lived and breathed ; most grateful—if to enjoy
 Without repining or desire for more,
 For different lot, or change to higher sphere,
 (Only except some impulses of pride
 With no determined object, though upheld
 By theories with suitable support)—
 Most grateful, if in such wise to enjoy
 Be proof of gratitude for what we have ;
 Else, I allow, most thankless.—But, at once,
 From some dark seat of fatal power was urged
 A claim that shattered all.—Our blooming girl,
 Caught in the gripe of death, with such brief time
 To struggle in as scarcely would allow
 Her cheek to change its colour, was conveyed
 From us to inaccessible worlds, to regions ¹
 Where height, or depth, admits not the approach
 Of living man, though longing to pursue.
 —With even as brief a warning—and how soon,
 With what short interval of time between,
 I tremble yet to think of—our last prop,
 Our happy life's only remaining stay—
 The brother followed ; and was seen no more ! *

¹ 1849.

From us, to regions inaccessible ;

1814.

* Wordsworth's own children, Catherine and Thomas, were removed by death, in a manner very similar to this, in June and December 1812, while they were living in the Grasmere Parsonage. Compare the sonnets beginning—

“Surprised by joy—impatient as the Wind,”

and

“Desponding Father! mark this altered bough.”

—Ed.

Calm as a frozen lake when ruthless winds
Blow fiercely, agitating earth and sky,
The Mother now remained ; as if in her,
Who, to the lowest region of the soul,
Had been erewhile unsettled and disturbed,
This second visitation had no power
To shake ; but only to bind up and seal ;
And to establish thankfulness of heart
In Heaven's determinations, ever just.
The eminence whereon her spirit stood,¹
Mine was unable to attain. Immense
The space that severed us ! But, as the sight
Communicates with heaven's ethereal orbs
Incalculably distant ; so, I felt
That consolation may descend from far
(And that is intercourse, and union, too,)
While, overcome with speechless gratitude,
And, with a holier love inspired, I looked
On her—at once superior to my woes
And partner of my loss.—O heavy change,
Dimness o'er this clear luminary crept
Insensibly ;—the immortal and divine
Yielded to mortal reflux ; her pure glory,
As from the pinnacle of worldly state
Wretched ambition drops astounded, fell
Into a gulf obscure of silent grief,
And keen heart-anguish—of itself ashamed,
Yet obstinately cherishing itself :
And, so consumed, she melted from my arms ;
And left me, on this earth, disconsolate !

What followed cannot be reviewed in thought ;

¹ 1849.

on which her spirit stood,

1814.

Much less, retraced in words. If she, of life
Blameless, so intimate with love and joy
And all the tender motions of the soul,
Had been supplanted, could I hope to stand—
Infirm, dependent, and now destitute ?
I called on dreams and visions, to disclose
That which is veiled from waking thought ; conjured
Eternity, as men constrain a ghost
To appear and answer ; to the grave I spake
Imploringly ;—looked up, and asked the Heavens
If Angels traversed their cerulean floors,
If fixed or wandering star could tidings yield
Of the departed spirit—what abode
It occupies—what consciousness retains
Of former loves and interests. Then my soul
Turned inward,—to examine of what stuff
Time's fetters are composed ; and life was put
To inquisition, long and profitless !
By pain of heart—now checked—and now impelled—
The intellectual power, through words and things,
Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way !*
And from those transports, and these toils abstruse,
Some trace am I enabled to retain
Of time, else lost ;—existing unto me
Only by records in myself not found.

From that abstraction I was roused,—and how ?
Even as a thoughtful shepherd by a flash
Of lightning startled in a gloomy cave
Of these wild hills. For, lo ! the dread Bastile,†
With all the chambers in its horrid towers,

* Compare *The Borderers* (Vol. I. p. 126).

Three sleepless nights I passed in sounding on,
Through words and things, a dim and perilous way.—ED.

† See *The Prelude*, Book Ninth (Vol. III. p. 309).—ED.

Fell to the ground :—by violence overthrown
 Of indignation ; and with shouts that drowned
 The crash it made in falling ! From the wreck
 A golden palace rose, or seemed to rise,
 The appointed seat of equitable law
 And mild paternal sway. The potent shock
 I felt : the transformation I perceived,
 As marvellously seized as in that moment
 When, from the blind mist issuing, I beheld
 Glory—beyond all glory ever seen,
 Confusion infinite of heaven and earth,
 Dazzling the soul. Meanwhile, prophetic harps
 In every grove were ringing, ‘ War shall cease ;
 ‘ Did ye not hear that conquest is abjured ?
 ‘ Bring garlands, bring forth choicest flowers, to deck
 ‘ The tree of Liberty.’—* My heart rebounded ;
 My melancholy voice the chorus joined ;
 —‘ Be joyful all ye nations ; in all lands,
 ‘ Ye that are capable of joy be glad !
 ‘ Henceforth, whate’er is wanting to yourselves
 ‘ In others ye shall promptly find ;—and all,
 ‘ Enriched by mutual and reflected wealth,
 ‘ Shall with one heart honour their common kind.’¹

Thus was I reconverted to the world ;
 Society became my glittering bride,
 And airy hopes my children.—From the depths

¹ 1832.

“ Be rich by mutual and reflected wealth.”

1814.

* During the American war of Independence, trees were planted as symbols of freedom. This custom passed over to France. The Jacobins planted the first tree of Liberty in Paris in 1790, and the practice spread rapidly. At each revolutionary period it was revived, and during the Empire again suppressed. A treatise has been written on the custom, by the Abbe Gregoire.—ED.

Of natural passion, seemingly escaped,
 My soul diffused herself ¹ in wide embrace
 Of institutions, and the forms of things ;
 As they exist, in mutable array,
 Upon life's surface. What, though in my veins
 There flowed no Gallic blood, nor had I breathed
 The air of France, not less than Gallic zeal
 Kindled and burnt among the sapless twigs
 Of my exhausted heart. If busy men
 In sober conclave met, to weave a web
 Of amity, whose living threads should stretch
 Beyond the seas, and to the farthest pole,
 There did I sit, assisting. If, with noise
 And acclamation, crowds in open air
 Expressed the tumult of their minds, my voice
 There mingled, heard or not. The powers of song
 I left not uninvoked ; and, in still groves,
 Where mild enthusiasts tuned a pensive lay
 Of thanks and expectation, in accord
 With their belief, I sang Saturnian rule
 Returned,—a progeny of golden years
 Permitted to descend, and bless mankind.
 —With promises the Hebrew Scriptures teem :
 I felt their invitation ; ² and resumed
 A long-suspended office in the House
 Of public worship, where, the glowing phrase
 Of ancient inspiration serving me,
 I promised also,—with undaunted trust
 Foretold, and added prayer to prophecy ;
 The admiration winning of the crowd ;
 The help desiring of the pure devout.

¹ 1827.

My soul diffused itself

1814.

² 1841.

I felt the invitation ;

1814.

Scorn and contempt forbid me to proceed !
 But History, time's slavish scribe, will tell
 How rapidly the zealots of the cause
 Disbanded—or in hostile ranks appeared ;
 Some, tired of honest service ; these, outdone,
 Disgusted therefore, or appalled, by aims
 Of fiercer zealots—so confusion reigned,
 And the more faithful were compelled to exclaim,
 As Brutus did to Virtue, ' Liberty,
 I worshipped thee, and find thee but a Shade !' *

Such recantation had for me no charm,
 Nor would I bend to it ; who should have grieved
 At aught, however fair, that bore the mien ¹
 Of a conclusion, or catastrophe.
 Why then conceal, that, when the simply good ²
 In timid selfishness withdrew, I sought
 Other support, not scrupulous whence it came ;
 And, by what compromise it stood, not nice ?
 Enough if notions seemed to be high-pitched,
 And qualities determined.—Among men
 So characterized did I maintain a strife ³
 Hopeless, and still more hopeless every hour ;

¹ 1827.

. . . . which bore the mien 1814.

² 1827.

. . . . when the simple good 1814.

³ 1827.

And qualities determined.—Ruling such,
 And with such herding, I maintained a strife 1814.

* It is recorded by Dion Cassius in his *Roman History*, Book xlvii., that Brutus before his death repeated this saying of Hercules,

“O misera virtus, nomen inane. Te quidem
 Ceu rem colebam ; at serva tu Fortunæ eras.” —ED.

But, in the process, I began to feel
 That, if the emancipation of the world
 Were missed, I should at least secure my own,
 And be in part compensated. For rights,
 Widely—inveterately usurped upon,
 I spake with vehemence; and promptly seized
 All that Abstraction ¹ furnished for my needs
 Or purposes; * nor scrupled to proclaim,
 And propagate, by liberty of life,
 Those new persuasions. Not that I rejoiced,
 Or even found pleasure, in such vagrant course,
 For its own sake; but farthest from the walk
 Which I had trod in happiness and peace,
 Was most inviting to a troubled mind;
 That, in a struggling and distempered world,
 Saw a seductive image of herself.²
 Yet, mark the contradictions of which Man
 Is still the sport! Here Nature was my guide,
 The Nature of the dissolute; but thee,
 O fostering Nature! I rejected—smiled
 At others' tears in pity; and in scorn
 At those, which thy soft influence sometimes drew
 From my unguarded heart.—The tranquil shores

¹ 1836.

Whate'er Abstraction 1814.

² 1827.

Beheld a cherished image of itself. 1814.

* "At the commencement of the French Revolution, in the remotest villages every tongue was employed in echoing and enforcing the almost geometrical abstractions of the physiocratic politicians and economists. The public roads were crowded with armed enthusiasts disputing on the inalienable sovereignty of the people, the imprescriptible laws of the pure reason, and the universal constitution, which as rising out of the nature and rights of man as man, all nations alike were under the obligation of adopting."—S. T. Coleridge, *The Statesman's Manual, a Lay Sermon*.—ED.

Of Britain circumscribed me ; else, perhaps
 I might have been entangled among deeds,
 Which, now, as infamous, I should abhor—
 Despise, as senseless : for my spirit relished
 Strangely the exasperation of that Land,
 Which turned an angry beak against the down
 Of her own breast ; confounded into hope
 Of disencumbering thus her fretful wings.¹

But all was quieted by iron bonds
 Of military sway. The shifting aims,
 The moral interests, the creative might,
 The varied functions and high attributes
 Of civil action, yielded to a power
 Formal, and odious, and contemptible.
 —In Britain, ruled a panic dread of change ;
 The weak were praised, rewarded, and advanced ;
 And, from the impulse of a just disdain,
 Once more did I retire into myself.
 There feeling no contentment, I resolved
 To fly, for safeguard, to some foreign shore,
 Remote from Europe ; from her blasted hopes ;
 Her fields of carnage, and polluted air.

Fresh blew the wind, when o'er the Atlantic Main
 The ship went gliding with her thoughtless crew ;
 And who among them but an Exile, freed
 From discontent, indifferent, pleased to sit
 Among the busily-employed, not more

¹ 1827.

. for I strangely relished
 The exasperated spirit of that Land,
 Which turned an angry beak against the down
 Of its own breast ; as if it hoped, thereby,
 To disencumber its impatient wings.

With obligation charged, with service taxed,
Than the loose pendant—to the idle wind
Upon the tall mast streaming. But, ye Powers
Of soul and sense mysteriously allied,
O, never let the Wretched, if a choice
Be left him, trust the freight of his distress
To a long voyage on the silent deep !
For, like a plague, will memory break out ;
And, in the blank and solitude of things,
Upon his spirit, with a fever's strength,
Will conscience prey.—Feebly must they have felt
Who, in old time, attired with snakes and whips
The vengeful Furies. *Beautiful* regards
Were turned on me—the face of her I loved ;
The Wife and Mother pitifully fixing
Tender reproaches, insupportable !
Where now that boasted liberty ? No welcome
From unknown objects I received ; and those,
Known and familiar, which the vaulted sky
Did, in the placid clearness of the night,
Disclose, had accusations to prefer
Against my peace. Within the cabin stood
That volume—as a compass for the soul—
Revered among the nations. I implored
Its guidance ; but the infallible support
Of faith was wanting. Tell me, why refused
To One by storms annoyed and adverse winds ;
Perplexed with currents ; of his weakness sick ;
Of vain endeavours tired ; and by his own,
And by his nature's, ignorance, dismayed !

Long-wished-for sight, the Western World appeared ;
And, when the ship was moored, I leaped ashore
Indignantly—resolved to be a man,

Who, having o'er the past no power, would live
No longer in subjection to the past,
With abject mind—from a tyrannic lord
Inviting penance, fruitlessly endured :
So, like a fugitive, whose feet have cleared
Some boundary, which his followers may not cross
In prosecution of their deadly chase,
Respiring I looked round.—How bright the sun,
The breeze how soft ! Can anything produced¹
In the old World compare, thought I, for power
And majesty with this gigantic stream,
Sprung from the desert ?* And behold a city
Fresh, youthful, and aspiring !† What are these
To me, or I to them ? As much at least
As he desires that they should be, whom winds
And waves have wafted to this distant shore,
In the condition of a damaged seed,
Whose fibres cannot, if they would, take root.
Here may I roam at large ;—my business is,
Roaming at large, to observe, and not to feel
And, therefore, not to act—convinced that all
Which bears the name of action, howsoe'er
Beginning, ends in servitude—still painful,
And mostly profitless. And, sooth to say,
On nearer view, a motley spectacle
Appeared, of high pretensions—unreproved
But by the obstreperous voice of higher still ;
Big passions strutting on a petty stage ;
Which a detached spectator may regard

¹ 1849.

How promising the Breeze ! Can aught produced 1814.

* The Hudson river, some of the sources of which rise in the Adirondack wilderness.—Ed.

† New York. - Ed.

Not unamused.—But ridicule demands
 Quick change of objects ; and, to laugh alone,
 At a composing distance¹ from the haunts
 Of strife and folly, though it be a treat
 As choice as ~~mus~~ing Leisure can bestow ;
 Yet, in the very centre of the crowd,
 To keep the secret of a poignant scorn,
 Howe'er to airy Demons suitable,
 Of all unsocial courses, is least fit²
 For the gross spirit of mankind,—the one
 That soonest fails to please, and quickliest turns
 Into vexation.

Let us, then, I said,
 Leave this unknit Republic to the scourge
 Of her own passions ;³ and to regions haste,
 Whose shades have never felt the encroaching axe,
 Or soil endured a transfer in the mart
 Of dire rapacity. There, Man abides,
 Primeval Nature's child. A creature weak
 In combination, (wherefore else driven back
 So far, and of his old inheritance
 So easily deprived ?) but, for that cause,
 More dignified, and stronger in himself ;
 Whether to act, judge, suffer, or enjoy.
 True, the intelligence of social art
 Hath overpowered his forefathers, and soon

¹ 1827.

. ; and, to laugh alone,
 In woods and wilds, or any lonely place,
 At a composing distance

1814.

² 1827.

May suit an airy Demon ; but, of all
 Unsocial courses, 'tis the one least fit

1814.

³ 1827.

Of its own passions ;

1814.

Will sweep the remnant of his line away ;
 But contemplations, worthier, nobler far
 Than her destructive energies, attend
 His independence, when along the side
 Of Mississippi, or that northern stream* ,
 That spreads¹ into successive seas,† he walks ;
 Pleased to perceive his own unshackled life,
 And his innate capacities of soul,
 There imaged : or when, having gained the top
 Of some commanding eminence, which yet
 Intruder ne'er beheld, he thence surveys
 Regions of wood and wide savannah, vast
 Expanse of unappropriated earth,
 With mind that sheds a light on what he sees ;
 Free as the sun, and lonely as the sun,
 Pouring above his head its radiance down
 Upon a living and rejoicing world !

So, westward, tow'rd the unviolated woods
 I bent my way ; and, roaming far and wide,
 Failed not to greet the merry Mocking-bird ;‡
 And, while the melancholy Muccawiss

¹ 1827.

Which spreads

1814.

* See Wordsworth's note, p. 397.—Ed.

† The St Lawrence.—Ed.

‡ "The Mocking Bird (*Turdus polyglottus*, Linn.), the American nightingale. He has a voice full, strong, and musical, and capable of almost every modulation, from the clear mellow tones of the Wood Thrush, to the savage scream of the Bald Eagle. In measure and accent he faithfully follows his originals. In force and sweetness of expression he greatly improves upon them. In his native groves, his song rises pre-eminent over every competitor. Neither is his strain altogether imitative. His notes are bold and full, and varied seemingly beyond all limits. They consist of short expressions of two, three, or, at the most, five or six syllables ; generally interspersed with imitations, and all of them uttered with great emphasis and rapidity, and continued with undiminished ardour for half

(The sportive bird's companion in the grove)
 Repeated, o'er and o'er, his plaintive cry,*
 I sympathised at leisure with the sound ;
 But that pure archetype of human greatness,
 I found him not. There, in his stead, appeared
 A creature, squalid, vengeful, and impure ;
 Remorseless, and submissive to no law
 But superstitious fear, and abject sloth.

Enough is told ! Here am I—ye have heard
 What evidence I seek, and vainly seek ;
 What from my fellow-beings I require,
 And either they have not to give, or I
 Lack virtue to receive ; what I myself,
 Too oft by wilful forfeiture, have lost¹
 Nor can regain. How languidly I look
 Upon this visible fabric of the world,
 May be divined—perhaps it hath been said :—
 But spare your pity, if there be in me
 Aught that deserves respect : for I exist,
 Within myself, not comfortless.—The tenour
 Which my life holds, he readily may conceive
 Whoe'er hath stood to watch a mountain brook
 In some still passage of its course, and seen,
 Within the depths of its capacious breast,

¹ 1849.

. I require,
 And cannot find ; what I myself have lost,

1814.

an hour, or an hour at a time." *American Ornithology*, by Wilson, Bonaparte, and Jardine, Vol. I. p. 164, &c.—Ed.

* I am indebted to Mr Edward Tylor, and also to the Rev. Charles M. Addison, of Arlington, Mass., for identifying the "melancholy Muccawiss" as the Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*, or *Antrostomus v.*). "Their melancholy night song has led some Indians to consider them the souls of ancestors killed in battle."—Mr Tylor. For some interesting letters in reference to the Muccawiss, see Note E in the Appendix to this volume ; and compare Charles Waterton's *Wanderings in South America*, &c., &c. (1828), and Wordsworth's poem, *A Morning Exercise*, written in 1828.—Ed.

Inverted trees, rocks, clouds, and azure sky ;¹
 And, on its glassy surface, specks of foam,
 And conglobated bubbles undissolved,
 Numerous as stars ; that, by their onward lapse,
 Betray to sight the motion of the stream,
 Else imperceptible. Meanwhile, is heard
 A softened roar, or murmur ;² and the sound
 Though soothing, and the little floating isles
 Though beautiful, are both by Nature charged
 With the same pensive office ; and make known
 Through what perplexing labyrinths, abrupt
 Precipitations, and untoward straits,
 The earth-born wanderer hath passed ; and quickly,
 That respite o'er, like traverses and toils
 Must he again encounter.³—Such a stream
 Is human Life ; and so the Spirit fares
 In the best quiet to her course allowed ;⁴
 And such is mine,—save only for a hope
 That my particular current soon will reach
 The unfathomable gulf, where all is still !”

¹ 1836.

Inverted trees, and rocks, and azure sky ;

1814.

² 1836.

Perchance, a roar or murmur ; . . .

1814.

. . . . a roar a murmur

1827.

³ 1849.

Must be again encountered.— . . .

1814.

⁴ 1836.

. . . . to its course allowed :

1814.

Book Fourth.

DESPONDENCY CORRECTED.

ARGUMENT.

State of feeling produced by the foregoing Narrative—A belief in a superintending Providence the only adequate support under affliction—Wanderer's ejaculation¹—Acknowledges the difficulty of a lively faith—Hence immoderate sorrow²—Exhortations—How received—Wanderer applies³ his discourse to that other cause of dejection in the Solitary's mind—Disappointment⁴ from the French Revolution—States grounds⁵ of hope, and insists on the necessity of patience and fortitude with respect to the course of great revolutions⁶—Knowledge the source of tranquillity—Rural Solitude favourable to⁷ knowledge

- ¹ 1827. *Wanderer's ejaculation to the supreme Being—* 1814.
1836. *Account of his own devotional feelings in youth involved in it—* 1814.
1827. *Implores that he may retain in age the power to find repose among enduring and eternal things—* 1814.
1827. *What these latter are—* 1814.
- ² 1836. *sorrow—but doubt or despondence not therefore to be inferred—* 1814.
1836. *and proceeds to administer consolation to the Solitary—* 1814.
- Consolation to the Solitary—* 1827.
- ³ 1827. *How these are received—Wanderer resumes—and applies* 1814.
- ⁴ 1827. *—the disappointment of his expectations* 1814.
- ⁵ 1827. *States the rational grounds* 1814.
- ⁶ 1827. *revolutions of the world—* 1814.
- ⁷ 1827. *Rural life and solitude particularly favourable to a* 1814.

of the inferior Creatures; Study of their habits and ways recommended;¹ exhortation to bodily exertion and communion² with Nature—*Morbid Solitude pitiable*³—*Superstition better than apathy*—*Apathy and destitution unknown in the infancy of society*—*The various modes of Religion prevented it*—*Illustrated*⁴ in the Jewish, Persian, Babylonian, Chaldean, and Grecian modes of belief—*Solitary interposes*—*Wanderer*⁵ points out the influence of religious and imaginative feeling in the humble ranks of society, illustrated⁶ from present and past times—*These principles*⁷ tend to recal exploded superstitions and popery—*Wanderer* rebuts this charge, and contrasts the dignities of the Imagination with the presumptuous⁸ littleness of certain modern Philosophers—*Recommends*⁹ other lights and guides—*Asserts the power of the Soul to regenerate herself*; *Solitary asks how*¹⁰—*Reply*—*Personal appeal*¹¹—*Exhortation to activity of body renewed*—*How to*

¹ 1827.

recommended for its influence on the affections and the imagination—

1814.

² 1827.

and an active communion

1814.

³ 1827.

. . . a pitiable thing—If the elevated imagination cannot be exerted—try the humbler fancy—

1814.

⁴ 1827.

—this illustrated

1814.

⁵ 1827.

Wanderer, in answer,

1814.

⁶ 1827.

feeling in the mind in the humble ranks of society, in rural life especially—This illustrated

1814.

⁷ 1827.

Observation that these principles

1814.

⁸ 1836.

presumptive littleness

1814.

⁹ 1827.

Philosophers, whom the Solitary appears to esteem—Recommends to him

1814.

¹⁰ 1827.

Solitary agitated, and asks how—

1814.

¹¹ 1836.

Happy for us that the imagination and affections in our own despite mitigate the evils of that state of intellectual Slavery which the calculating understanding is so apt to produce—

1814.

Happy that the imagination and the affections mitigate the evils of that intellectual slavery . . .

1827.

commune with Nature—Wanderer concludes with¹ a legitimate union of the imagination, affections, understanding, and reason—Effect of his discourse²—Evening ; Return to the Cottage.

¹ 1827.

How Nature is to be communed with—Wanderer concludes with a prospect of a 1814.

² 1827.

Effect of the Wanderer's discourse— 1814.

HERE closed the Tenant of that lonely vale
His mournful narrative—commenced in pain,
In pain commenced, and ended without peace :
Yet tempered, not unfrequently, with strains
Of native feeling, grateful to our minds ;
And yielding surely some relief to his,¹
While we sate listening with compassion due.
A pause of silence followed ; then, with voice
That did not falter though the heart was moved,²
The Wanderer said :—

“ One adequate support

For the calamities of mortal life
Exists—one only ; an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power ;
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.
—The darts of anguish *fix* not where the seat
Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
By acquiescence in the Will supreme

¹ 1849.

And doubtless yielding some relief to his, 1814.

² 1849.

Such pity yet surviving, with firm voice,
. 1814.

Such pity yet surviving, with clear voice
That falter'd not, albeit the heart was moved, 1836.

For time and for eternity ; by faith,
Faith absolute in God, including hope,
And the defence that lies in boundless love
Of his perfections ; with habitual dread
Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone,
To the dishonour of his holy name.
Soul of our Souls, and safeguard of the world !
Sustain, thou only canst, the sick of heart ;
Restore their languid spirits, and recal
Their lost affections unto thee and thine !”*

Then, as we issued from that covert nook,
He thus continued, lifting up his eyes
To heaven :—“ How beautiful this dome of sky ;
And the vast hills, in fluctuation fixed
At thy command, how awful ! Shall the Soul,
Human and rational, report of thee
Even less than these ?—Be mute who will, who can,
Yet I will praise thee with impassioned voice :
My lips, that may forget thee in the crowd,
Cannot forget thee here ; where thou hast built,
For thy own glory, in the wilderness !
Me didst thou constitute a priest of thine,
In such a temple as we now behold
Reared for thy presence : therefore, am I bound
To worship, here, and everywhere—as one
Not doomed to ignorance, though forced to tread,

* In January 1849, the year before Wordsworth's death, he was asked by Mr Ellis Yarnall of Philadelphia for his autograph, for a lady in America ; and, in reply, he wrote the four lines, beginning

“ Soul of our souls, and safeguard of the world ! ”

They were doubtless suggested to him at the time by the death of his own daughter. See Mr Yarnall's paper on “ Wordsworth's Influence in America,” in the *Transactions of the Wordsworth Society*, No. V.—ED.

From childhood up, the ways of poverty ;
 From unreflecting ignorance preserved,
 And from debasement rescued.—By thy grace
 The particle divine remained unquenched ;
 And, 'mid the wild weeds of a rugged soil,
 Thy bounty caused to flourish deathless flowers,
 From paradise transplanted : wintry age
 Impends ; the frost will gather round my heart ;
 If the flowers wither, I am worse than dead !¹
 —Come, labour, when the worn-out frame requires
 Perpetual sabbath ; come, disease and want ;
 And sad exclusion through decay of sense ;
 But leave me unabated trust in thee—
 And let thy favour, to the end of life,
 Inspire me with ability to seek
 Repose and hope among eternal things—
 Father of heaven and earth ! and I am rich,
 And will possess my portion in content !

And what are things eternal ?—powers depart,”
 The grey-haired Wanderer stedfastly replied,
 Answering the question which himself had asked,
 “ Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
 And passions hold a fluctuating seat :
 But, by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
 And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,²
 Duty exists ;—immutably survive,
 For our support, the measures and the forms,
 Which an abstract intelligence supplies ;

¹ 1836.

And, if they wither, I am worse than dead !

1814.

² 1827.

. . . to eclipse or wane,

1814.

Whose kingdom is, where time and space are not.*
 Of other converse which mind, soul, and heart,
 Do, with united urgency, require,
 What more that may not perish?—Thou, dread source,
 Prime, self-existing cause and end of all
 That in the scale of being fill their place;
 Above our human region, or below,
 Set and sustained;—thou, who didst wrap the cloud
 Of infancy around us, that thyself,
 Therein, with our simplicity awhile
 Might'st hold, on earth, communion undisturbed; †
 Who from the anarchy of dreaming sleep,
 Or from its death-like void, with punctual care,
 And touch as gentle as the morning light,
 Restor'st us, daily, to the powers of sense
 And reason's stedfast rule—thou, thou alone
 Art everlasting, and the blessèd Spirits,
 Which thou includest, as the sea her waves:
 For adoration thou endur'st; endure
 For consciousness the motions of thy will;
 For apprehension those transcendent truths
 Of the pure intellect, that stand as laws
 (Submission constituting strength and power)
 Even to thy Being's infinite majesty!
 This universe shall pass away—a work¹
 Glorious! because the shadow of thy might,
 A step, or link, for intercourse with thee.
 Ah! if the time must come, in which my feet

¹ 1827.* Compare Kant's *Kritiken*.—Ed.† Compare the *Ode on Immortality*—

“Trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home.”

No more shall stray where meditation leads,
 By flowing stream, through wood, or craggy wild,
 Loved haunts like these; the unimprisoned Mind
 May yet have scope to range among her own,
 Her thoughts, her images, her high desires.
 If the dear faculty of sight should fail,
 Still, it may be allowed me to remember
 What visionary powers of eye and soul
 In youth were mine; when, stationed on the top
 Of some huge hill—expectant, I beheld
 The sun rise up,* from distant climes returned
 Darkness to chase, and sleep; and bring the day
 His bounteous gift! or saw him toward the deep¹
 Sink, with a retinue of flaming clouds
 Attended; then, my spirit was entranced
 With joy exalted to beatitude;
 The measure of my soul was filled with bliss,
 And holiest love; as earth, sea, air, with light,
 With pomp, with glory, with magnificence!

Those fervent raptures are for ever flown; †
 And, since their date, my soul hath undergone
 Change manifold, for better or for worse:
 Yet cease I not to struggle, and aspire²
 Heavenward; and chide the part of me that flags,

¹ 1832.

. tow'rds the deep 1814.

² 1827.

. , and to aspire 1814.

* Compare Book I. p. 32.—Ed.

† Compare *Tintern Abbey* (Vol. I. p. 269)—

“That time is past,
 And all its aching joys are now no more,
 And all its dizzy raptures.”

Through sinful choice ; or dread necessity
 On human nature from above imposed.
 'Tis, by comparison, an easy task
 Earth to despise ;* but, to converse with Heaven—
 This is not easy :—to relinquish all
 We have, or hope, of happiness and joy,
 And stand in freedom loosened from this world,
 I deem not arduous ; but must needs confess
 That 'tis a thing impossible to frame
 Conceptions equal to the soul's desires ;
 And the most difficult of tasks to *keep*
 Heights which the soul is competent to gain.
 —Man is of dust : ethereal hopes are his,
 Which, when they should sustain themselves aloft,
 Want due consistence ; like a pillar of smoke,
 That with majestic energy from earth
 Rises ; but, having reached the thinner air,
 Melts, and dissolves, and is no longer seen.
 From this infirmity of mortal kind
 Sorrow proceeds, which else were not ; at least,
 If grief be something hallowed and ordained,
 If, in proportion, it be just and meet,
 Yet, through this weakness of the general heart,
 Is it enabled to maintain its hold ¹
 In that excess which conscience disapproves.
 For who could sink and settle to that point
 Of selfishness ; so senseless who could be
 As long ² and perseveringly to mourn

¹ 1836.

. , it be just and meet,
 Through this, 'tis able to maintain its hold,

1814.

² 1827.

. ; so senseless who could be
 In framing estimates of loss and gain,
 As long

1814.

For any object of his love, removed
 From this unstable world, if he could fix
 A satisfying view upon that state
 Of pure, imperishable, blessedness,
 Which reason promises, and holy writ
 Ensures to all believers?—Yet mistrust
 Is of such incapacity, methinks,
 No natural branch; despondency far less;¹
 And, least of all, is absolute despair.²
 —And, if there be whose tender frames have drooped
 Even to the dust; apparently, through weight
 Of anguish unrelieved, and lack of power
 An agonizing sorrow to transmute;
 Deem not that proof is here of hope withheld³
 When wanted most; a confidence impaired
 So pitiably, that, having ceased to see
 With bodily eyes, they are borne down by love
 Of what is lost, and perish through regret.
 Oh! no, the innocent Sufferer often sees⁴
 Too clearly; feels too vividly; and longs
 To realize the vision, with intense
 And over-constant yearning;—there—there lies
 The excess, by which the balance is destroyed.
 Too, too contracted are these walls of flesh,
 This vital warmth too cold, these visual orbs,
 Though inconceivably endowed, too dim
 For any passion of the soul that leads
 To ecstasy; and, all the crooked paths

¹ 1836.

. ; despondency far less.

1814.

² This line added in 1836.³ 1836.

Infer not hence a hope from those withheld.

1814.

⁴ 1836.

Oh! no, full oft the innocent Sufferer sees

1814.

Of time and change disdaining, takes its course
 Along the line of limitless desires.
 I, speaking now from such disorder free,
 Nor rapt, nor craving, but in settled peace,
 I cannot doubt that they whom you deplore
 Are glorified; or, if they sleep, shall wake
 From sleep, and dwell with God in endless love.
 Hope, below this, consists not with belief
 In mercy, carried infinite degrees
 Beyond the tenderness of human hearts:
 Hope, below this, consists not with belief
 In perfect wisdom, guiding mightiest power,
 That finds no limits but her own pure will.¹

Here then we rest; not fearing for our creed
 The worst that human reasoning can achieve,
 To unsettle or perplex it:² yet with pain
 Acknowledging, and grievous self-reproach,
 That, though immovably convinced, we want
 Zeal, and the virtue to exist by faith
 As soldiers live by courage; as, by strength
 Of heart, the sailor fights with roaring seas.
 Alas! the endowment of immortal power
 Is matched unequally with custom, time,
 And domineering faculties of sense
 In *all*; in most, with superadded foes,
 Idle temptations; open vanities,

¹ 1827.

. . . . but its own pure Will.

1814.

² 1827.

Here then we rest: not fearing to be left
 In undisturbed possession of our creed
 For aught that human reasoning can achieve,
 To unsettle or perplex us: . . .

1814.

Ephemeral offspring¹ of the unblushing world;
 And, in the private regions of the mind,
 Ill-governed passions, ranklings of despite,
 Immoderate wishes, pining discontent,
 Distress and care. What then remains?—To seek
 Those helps for his occasions ever near
 Who lacks not will to use them; vows, renewed
 On the first motion of a holy thought;
 Vigils of contemplation; praise; and prayer—
 A stream, which, from the fountain of the heart
 Issuing, however feebly, nowhere flows
 Without access of unexpected strength.
 But, above all, the victory is most sure
 For him, who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
 To yield entire submission to the law
 Of conscience—conscience revered and obeyed,
 As God's most intimate presence in the soul,
 And his most perfect image in the world.
 —Endeavour thus to live; these rules regard;
 These helps solicit; and a stedfast seat
 Shall then be yours among the happy few
 Who dwell on earth, yet breathe empyreal air,
 Sons of the morning. For your nobler part,
 Ere disencumbered of her mortal chains,
 Doubt shall be quelled and trouble chased away;
 With only such degree of sadness left
 As may support longings of pure desire;
 And strengthen love, rejoicing secretly
 In the sublime attractions of the grave.”

While, in this strain, the venerable Sage

¹ 1827.

. open vanities
 Of dissipation; countless, still-renewed,
 Ephemeral offspring

Poured forth his aspirations, and announced
 His judgments, near that lonely house we paced
 A plot of green-sward, seemingly preserved
 By nature's care from wreck of scattered stones,
 And from encroachment¹ of encircling heath:
 Small space! but, for reiterated steps,
 Smooth and commodious; as a stately deck
 Which to and fro the mariner is used
 To tread for pastime, talking with his mates,
 Or haply thinking of far-distant friends,
 While the ship glides before a steady breeze.
 Stillness prevailed around us: and the voice
 That spake was capable to lift the soul
 Toward regions² yet more tranquil. But, methought,
 That he, whose fixed despondency had given
 Impulse and motive to that strong discourse,
 Was less upraised in spirit than abashed;
 Shrinking from admonition, like a man
 Who feels that to exhort is to reproach.
 Yet not to be diverted from his aim,
 The Sage continued:—

“For that other loss,
 The loss of confidence in social man,
 By the unexpected transports of our age
 Carried so high, that every thought, which looked
 Beyond the temporal destiny of the Kind,
 To many seemed superfluous—as, no cause
 Could e'er for such exalted confidence³

¹ 1827.

And from the encroachment . . . 1814.

² 1827.

Tow'rds regions 1814.

³ 1849.

For such exalted confidence could e'er 1814.

Exist; so, none is now for fixed despair:¹
 The two extremes are equally disowned
 By reason: if, with sharp recoil, from one
 You have been driven far as its opposite,
 Between them seek the point whereon to build
 Sound expectations. So doth he advise²
 Who shared at first the illusion; but was soon
 Cast from the pedestal of pride by shocks
 Which Nature gently gave, in woods and fields;
 Nor unreprieved by Providence, thus speaking
 To the inattentive children of the world:
 ' Vain-glorious Generation! what new powers
 ' On you have been conferred? what gifts, withheld
 ' From your progenitors, have ye received,
 ' Fit recompense of new desert? what claim
 ' Are ye prepared to urge, that my decrees
 ' For you should undergo a sudden change;
 ' And the weak functions of one busy day,
 ' Reclaiming and extirpating, perform
 ' What all the slowly-moving years of time,
 ' With their united force, have left undone?
 ' By nature's gradual processes be taught;
 ' By story be confounded! Ye aspire
 ' Rashly, to fall once more; and that false fruit,
 ' Which, to your over-weening spirits, yields
 ' Hope of a flight celestial, will produce³

¹ 1827.

. for such despair :

1814.

² 1827.

The two extremes are equally remote
 From Truth and Reason; do not, then, confound
 One with the other, but reject them both;
 And choose the middle point, whereon to build
 Sound expectations. This doth he advise

1814.

³ 1814-1849.

Which to your over-weening spirits feeds
 Hope of a godlike flight,

C.

‘ Misery and shame. But Wisdom of her sons
‘ Shall not the less, though late, be justified.’*

Such timely warning,” said the Wanderer, “gave
That visionary voice ; and, at this day,
When a Tartarean darkness overspreads
The groaning nations ; when the impious rule,
By will or by established ordinance,
Their own dire agents, and constrain the good
To acts which they abhor ; though I bewail
This triumph, yet the pity of my heart
Prevents me not from owning, that the law,
By which mankind now suffers, is most just.
For by superior energies ; more strict
Affiance in each other ; faith more firm
In their unhallowed principles ; the bad
Have fairly earned a victory o’er the weak,
The vacillating, inconsistent good.
Therefore, not unconsoled, I wait—in hope
To see the moment, when the righteous cause
Shall gain defenders zealous and devout
As they who have opposed her ; in which Virtue
Will, to her efforts, tolerate no bounds
That are not lofty as her rights ; aspiring
By impulse of her own ethereal zeal.
That spirit only can redeem mankind ;
And when that sacred spirit shall appear,
Then shall *our* triumph be complete as theirs.
Yet, should this confidence prove vain, the wise
Have still the keeping of their proper peace ;
Are guardians of their own tranquillity.
They act, or they recede, observe, and feel ;

‘ Knowing¹ the heart of man is set to be*
 The centre of this world, about the which
 Those revolutions of disturbances
 Still roll ; where all the aspects of misery
 Predominate ; whose strong effects are such
 As he must bear, being powerless to redress ;
And that unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is Man !†

Happy is he who lives to understand,
 Not human nature only, but explores
 All natures,—to the end that he may find
 The law that governs each ; and where begins
 The union, the partition where, that makes
 Kind and degree, among all visible Beings ;
 The constitutions, powers, and faculties,
 Which they inherit,—cannot step beyond,—
 And cannot fall beneath ; that do assign
 To every class its station and its office,
 Through all the mighty commonwealth of things
 Up from the creeping plant to sovereign Man.
 Such converse, if directed by a meek,
 Sincere, and humble spirit, teaches love :
 For knowledge is delight ; and such delight
 Breeds love : yet, suited as it rather is
 To thought and to the climbing intellect,
 It teaches less to love, than to adore ;
 If that be not indeed the highest love ! ”

“ Yet,” said I, tempted here to interpose,

¹ 1827.

“ Knowing ”—(to adopt the energetic words
 Which a time-hallowed Poet hath employed)

“ Knowing

1814.

* See Wordsworth's note, p. 398.—ED.

† Samuel Daniel ; from his poem, *To the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland*.—ED.

“The dignity of life is not impaired
By aught that innocently satisfies
The humbler cravings of the heart ; and he
Is a still happier man, who, for those heights
Of speculation not unfit, descends ;
And such benign affections cultivates
Among the inferior kinds ; not merely those
That he may call his own, and which depend,
As individual objects of regard,
Upon his care, from whom he also looks
For signs and tokens of a mutual bond ;
But others, far beyond this narrow sphere,
Whom, for the very sake of love, he loves.
Nor is it a mean praise of rural life
And solitude, that they do favour most,
Most frequently call forth, and best sustain,
These pure sensations ; that can penetrate
The obstreperous city ; on the barren seas
Are not unfelt ; and much might recommend,
How much they might inspirit and endear,
The loneliness of this sublime retreat !”

“Yes,” said the Sage, resuming the discourse
Again directed to his downcast Friend,
“If, with the froward will and grovelling soul
Of man, offended, liberty is here,
And invitation every hour renewed,
To mark *their* placid state, who never heard
Of a command which they have power to break,
Or rule which they are tempted to transgress :
These, with a soothed or elevated heart,
May we behold ; their knowledge register ;
Observe their ways ; and, free from envy, find
Complacence there :—but wherefore this to you ?

I guess that, welcome to your lonely hearth,
 The redbreast, ruffled up by winter's cold
 Into a 'feathery bunch,' feeds at your hand:¹
 A box, perchance, is from your casement hung
 For the small wren to build in ;—not in vain,
 The barriers disregarding that surround
 This deep abiding place, before your sight
 Mounts on the breeze the butterfly ; and soars,
 Small creature as she is, from earth's bright flowers,
 Into the dewy clouds. Ambition reigns
 In the waste wilderness : the Soul ascends
 Drawn towards her native firmament of heaven,²
 When the fresh eagle, in the month of May,
 Upborne, at evening, on replenished wing,
 This shaded valley leaves ;³ * and leaves the dark
 Empurpled hills, conspicuously renewing
 A proud communication with the sun
 Low sunk beneath the horizon !—List !—I heard,
 From yon huge breast of rock, a voice sent forth⁴
 As if the visible mountain made the cry.
 Again !"—The effect upon the soul was such
 As he expressed : from out the mountain's heart
 The solemn voice appeared to issue, startling
 The blank air—for the region all around

¹ 1836.

The Redbreast feeds in winter from your hand ; 1814.

² 1843.

Towards her native firmament of heaven, 1814.

³ 1820.

This shady valley leaves,— 1814.

⁴ 1849.From yon huge breast of rock, a solemn bleat ;
 Sent forth as if it were the Mountain's voice, 1814.

* The fact of the eagle having once haunted the Cumbrian and Westmoreland valleys is proved by the number of rocks, crags, &c., that are named from it.—ED.

Stood empty of all shape of life, and silent
 Save for that single cry, the unanswer'd bleat
 Of a poor lamb—left somewhere to itself,¹
 The plaintive spirit of the solitude ! *
 He paused, as if unwilling to proceed,
 Through consciousness that silence in such place
 Was best, the most affecting eloquence.
 But soon his thoughts returned upon themselves,
 And, in soft tone of speech, thus he resumed.²

“ Ah ! if the heart, too confidently raised,
 Perchance too lightly occupied, or lulled
 Too easily, despise or overlook

¹ 1849.

As he expressed ; for, from the mountain's heart
 The solemn bleat appeared to come ; there was
 No other—and the region all around
 Stood silent, empty of all shape of life.

—It was a Lamb—left somewhere to itself, 1814.

As he expressed ; from out the mountain's heart
 The solemn bleat appeared to issue, startling
 The blank air—for the region all around
 Stood silent, empty of all shape of life

1827.

As he described the regions all around
 Stood silent, empty of all shape of life.
 And from the mountain's stony heart the voice
 Appeared to come, though but the unanswered bleat

Again ! in the surrounding vacancy

The effect upon the soul was . . . C.

² 1836.

. . . he thus resumed. 1814.

* The following occurs in the Fenwick note to the “ Poem on the naming of Places,” addressed *To Joanna* :—“ The effect of the reverberation of voices in some parts of these mountains is very striking. There is, in ‘ The Excursion,’ an allusion to the bleat of a lamb thus re-echoed and described without any exaggeration, as I heard it, on the side of Stickle Tarn, from the precipice that stretches on to Langdale Pikes.” The “ precipice ” referred to is Pavy Ark.—ED.

The vassalage that binds her to the earth,
 Her sad dependence upon time, and all
 The trepidations of mortality,
 What place so destitute and void—but there
 The little flower her vanity shall check;
 The trailing worm reprove her thoughtless pride?

These craggy regions, these chaotic wilds,
 Does that benignity pervade, that warms
 The mole contented with her darksome walk
 In the cold ground; and to the emmet gives
 Her foresight, and intelligence that makes ¹
 The tiny creatures strong by social league;
 Supports the generations, multiplies
 Their tribes, till we behold a spacious plain
 Or grassy bottom, all, with little hills—
 Their labour, covered, as a lake with waves; *
 Thousands of cities, in the desert place
 Built up of life, and food, and means of life!
 Nor wanting here, to entertain the thought,
 Creatures that in communities exist,
 Less, as might seem, for general guardianship
 Or through dependence upon mutual aid,
 Than by participation of delight
 And a strict love of fellowship, combined.
 What other spirit can it be that prompts
 The gilded summer flies to mix and weave
 Their sports together in the solar beam,
 Or in the gloom of twilight hum their joy?

¹ 1827.

. . . ; and the intelligence that makes

1814.

* There are many ant-hills in this district of Westmoreland. Note that the description here is of the effect of a lake seen from above, looking down on it.—Ed.

More obviously the self-same influence rules
 The feathered kinds ; the fieldfare's pensive flock,¹
 The cawing rooks, and sea-mews from afar,
 Hovering above these inland solitudes,
 By the rough wind unscattered, at whose call
 Up through the trenches of the long-drawn vales
 Their voyage was begun :² nor is its power
 Unfelt among the sedentary fowl
 That seek yon pool,† and there prolong their stay
 In silent congress ; or together roused
 Take flight ; while with their clang the air resounds :
 And, over all, in that ethereal vault,³
 Is the mute company of changeful clouds ;
 Bright apparition, suddenly put forth,
 The rainbow smiling on the faded storm ;
 The mild assemblage of the starry heavens ;
 And the great sun, earth's universal lord !

How bountiful is Nature ! he shall find
 Who seeks not ; and to him, who hath not asked,

¹ 1827.

. pensive flocks, 1814.

² 1836.

Unscattered by the wind, at whose loud call
 Their voyage was begun : 1814.

By the rough wind unscattered, at whose call
 Their voyage was begun ! 1827.

.
 Their voyage they began : C.

³ 1832.

. , in that ethereal arch 1814.

* The fieldfares have a habit of settling together, and sitting perfectly still, till they are disturbed ; when they fly off, and settling again, sit silently as before.—ED.

† Blea Tarn.—ED.

Large measure shall be dealt. Three sabbath-days
 Are scarcely told, since, on a service bent
 Of mere humanity, you clomb those heights ;
 And what a marvellous and heavenly show
 Was suddenly revealed !¹—the swains moved on,
 And heeded not : you lingered, you perceived
 And felt, deeply as living man could feel.
 There is a luxury² in self-dispraise ;
 And inward self-disparagement affords
 To meditative spleen a grateful feast.
 Trust me, pronouncing on your own desert,
 You judge unthankfully : distempered nerves
 Infect the thoughts : the languor of the frame
 Depresses the soul's vigour. Quit your couch—
 Cleave not so fondly to your moody cell ;
 Nor let the hallowed powers, that shed from heaven
 Stillness and rest, with disapproving eye
 Look down upon your taper, through a watch
 Of midnight hours, unseasonably twinkling
 In this deep Hollow, like a sullen star
 Dimly reflected in a lonely pool.
 Take courage, and withdraw yourself from ways
 That run not parallel to nature's course.
 Rise with the lark ! your matins shall obtain
 Grace, be their composition what it may,
 If but with hers performed ; * climb once again,
 Climb every day, those ramparts ; † meet the breeze

¹ 1836.

Was to your sight revealed ! . . . 1814.

² 1836.

. . . , and perceived.

There is a luxury . . . 1814.

* Compare *Rules and Lessons* in Henry Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans*.—
 ED.

† The heights of Blake Rigg and Lingmoor.—ED.

Upon their tops, adventurous as a bee
 That from your garden thither soars, to feed
 On new-blown heath ; let yon commanding rock
 Be your frequented watch-tower ; roll the stone
 In thunder down the mountains ; with all your might
 Chase the wild goat ; and if the bold red deer
 Fly to those harbours,¹ driven by hound and horn
 Loud echoing, add your speed to the pursuit ;
 So, wearied to your hut shall you return,
 And sink at evening into sound repose.”

The Solitary lifted toward the hills²
 A kindling eye :—accordant feelings rushed
 Into my bosom, whence these words broke forth :³
 “ Oh ! what a joy it were, in vigorous health,
 To have a body (this our vital frame
 With shrinking sensibility endued,
 And all the nice regards of flesh and blood)
 And to the elements surrender it
 As if it were a spirit !—How divine,
 The liberty, for frail, for mortal man
 To roam at large among unpeopled glens
 And mountainous retirements, only trod
 By devious footsteps ; regions consecrate
 To oldest time ! and, reckless of the storm
 That keeps the raven quiet in her nest,

¹ 1836.

Fly to these harbours, 1814.

² 1827.

. towards the hills 1814.

³ 1849.An animated eye ; and thoughts were mine
 Which this ejaculation clothed in words— 1814.A kindling eye ;—poetic feelings rushed
 Into my bosom, whence these words broke forth : 1827.

Be as a presence or a motion—one
Among the many there; and while the mists
Flying, and rainy vapours, call out shapes
And phantoms from the crags and solid earth
As fast as a musician scatters sounds
Out of an instrument; and while the streams
(As at a first creation and in haste
To exercise their untried faculties)
Descending from the region of the clouds,
And starting from the hollows of the earth
More multitudinous every moment, rend
Their way before them—what a joy to roam
An equal among mightiest energies;
And haply sometimes with articulate voice,
Amid the deafening tumult, scarcely heard
By him that utters it, exclaim aloud,
'Rage on ye elements! let moon and stars
Their aspects lend, and mingle in their turn
With this commotion (ruinous though it be)
From day to night, from night to day, prolonged!'

“Yes,” said the Wanderer, taking from my lips
The strain of transport, “whosoe’er in youth
Has, through ambition of his soul, given way
To such desires, and grasped at such delight,

¹ 1849.

Be this continued so from day to day,
Nor let it have an end from month to month !”

Be this continued so from day to day,
Nor let the fierce commotion have an end,
Ruinous though it be, from month to month !” 1827.

May this wild uproar last from day to day
Nor let from month to month the fierce commotion,
Ruinous though it be, abate its rage.

Shall feel congenial stirrings late and long,¹
 In spite of all the weakness that life brings,
 Its cares and sorrows ; he, though taught to own
 The tranquillizing power of time, shall wake,
 Wake sometimes to a noble restlessness—
 Loving the sports² which once he gloried in.

Compatriot, Friend, remote are Garry's hills,
 The streams far distant of your native glen ;
 Yet is their form and image here expressed
 With brotherly resemblance.³ Turn your steps
 Wherever fancy leads ; by day, by night,
 Are various engines working, not the same
 As those with which⁴ your soul in youth was moved,
 But by the great Artificer endowed⁵
 With no inferior power. You dwell alone ;
 You walk, you live, you speculate alone ;
 Yet doth remembrance, like a sovereign prince,
 For you a stately gallery maintain
 Of gay or tragic pictures. You have seen,
 Have acted, suffered, travelled far, observed
 With no incurious eye ; and books are yours,
 Within whose silent chambers treasure lies
 Preserved from age to age ; more precious far
 Than that accumulated store of gold

¹ 1827.

Shall feel the stirrings of them late and long ; 1814.

² 1827.

Loving the spots* 1814.

³ 1827.

. expressed
 As by a duplicate, at least set forth
 With brotherly resemblance. 1814.

⁴ 1836.

As those by which 1814.

⁵ 1836.

. endowed 1814.

* Possibly a misprint in the edition of 1814.—ED.

And orient gems, which, for a day of need,
 The Sultan hides deep in ancestral tombs.¹
 These hoards of truth you can unlock at will :
 And music waits upon your skilful touch,
 Sounds which the wandering shepherd from these heights
 Hears, and forgets his purpose ;—furnished thus,
 How can you droop, if willing to be upraised ?²

A piteous lot it were to flee from Man—
 Yet not rejoice in Nature. He, whose hours
 Are by domestic pleasures uncaressed
 And unenlivened ; who exists whole years
 Apart from benefits received or done
 'Mid the transactions of the bustling crowd ;
 Who neither hears, nor feels a wish to hear,
 Of the world's interests—such a one hath need
 Of a quick fancy, and an active heart,
 That, for the day's consumption, books may yield
 Food not unwholesome ; earth and air correct
 His morbid humour, with delight supplied
 Or solace, varying as the seasons change.³
 —Truth has her pleasure grounds, her haunts of ease,
 And easy contemplation ; gay parterres,
 And labyrinthine walks, her sunny glades
 And shady groves in studied contrast—each,

¹ 1836.

The Sultan hides within ancestral tombs. 1814.

² 1836.

. . . . , if willing to be raised ? 1814.

³ 1849.A not unwholesome food, and earth and air
 Supply his morbid humour with delight. 1814.Food not unwholesome ; earth and air correct
 His morbid humour, with delight supplied. 1836.

For recreation, leading into each :¹
 These may he range, if willing to partake
 Their soft indulgences, and in due time
 May issue thence, recruited for the tasks
 And course of service Truth requires from those
 Who tend her altars, wait upon her throne,
 And guard her fortresses. Who thinks, and feels,
 And recognises ever and anon
 The breeze of nature stirring in his soul,
 Why need such man go desperately astray,
 And nurse 'the dreadful appetite of death ?'
 If tired with systems, each in its degree
 Substantial, and all crumbling in their turn,
 Let him build systems of his own, and smile
 At the fond work, demolished with a touch ;
 If unreligious, let him be at once,
 Among ten thousand innocents, enrolled
 A pupil in the many-chambered school,
 Where superstition weaves her airy dreams.

Life's autumn past, I stand on winter's verge ;
 And daily lose what I desire to keep :
 Yet rather would I instantly decline
 To the traditionary sympathies
 Of a most rustic ignorance, and take
 A fearful apprehension from the owl
 Or death-watch : and as readily rejoice,
 If two auspicious magpies crossed my way ;—
 To this would rather bend than see and hear²
 The repetitions wearisome of sense,
 Where soul is dead, and feeling hath no place ;

¹ 1836.

And shady groves, for recreation framed :

1814.

² 1827.

This rather would I do than see and hear

1814.

Where knowledge, ill begun in cold remark
 On outward things, with formal inference ends ;
 Or, if the mind turn inward, she recoils
 At once—or, not recoiling, is perplexed—
 Lost in a gloom of uninspired research ;¹
 Meanwhile, the heart within the heart, the seat
 Where peace and happy consciousness should dwell,
 On its own axis restlessly revolving,
 Seeks, yet can nowhere find, the light of truth.^{2*}

Upon the breast of new-created earth
 Man walked ; and when and wheresoe'er he moved,
 Alone or mated, solitude was not.
 He heard, borne on the wind,³ the articulate voice
 Of God ; † and Angels to his sight appeared
 Crowning the glorious hills of paradise ;
 Or through the groves gliding like morning mist
 Enkindled by the sun. He sate—and talked
 With winged Messengers ; ‡ who daily brought
 To his small island in the ethereal deep
 Tidings of joy and love.—From those pure heights⁴
 (Whether of actual vision, sensible

¹ 1836.

Or if the Mind turn inward 'tis perplexed,
 Lost in a gloom of uninspired research ; 1814.

² 1849.

. restlessly revolves,
 Yet nowhere finds the cheering light of truth. 1814.
 Rests not but on its axis, evermore
 Revolving, nowhere finds the light of truth. C.
 Seeks, yet can nowhere find the light of truth. C.

³ 1856.

He heard, upon the wind, . . . 1814.

⁴ 1836.

. . . .—From these pure Heights 1814.

* Compare the *Poet's Epitaph* (Vol. II. p. 66).—ED.

† Compare Genesis iii. 8.—ED.

‡ Genesis xviii. 1, 2.—ED.

To sight and feeling, or that in this sort
 Have condescendingly been shadowed forth
 Communications spiritually maintained,
 And intuitions moral and divine)
 Fell Human-kind—to banishment condemned*
 That flowing years repealed not : and distress
 And grief spread wide ;† but Man escaped the doom
 Of destitution ;—solitude was not.
 —Jehovah‡—shapeless Power above all Powers,
 Single and one, the omnipresent God,
 By vocal utterance, or blaze of light,
 Or cloud of darkness, localised in heaven ;§
 On earth, enshrined within the wandering ark ;||
 Or, out of Sion, thundering from his throne
 Between the Cherubim¶—on the chosen Race
 Showered miracles,** and ceased not to dispense
 Judgments, that filled the land from age to age
 With hope, and love, and gratitude, and fear ;††
 And with amazement smote ;—thereby to assert
 His scorned, or unacknowledged, sovereignty.
 And when the One, ineffable of name,
 Of nature¹ indivisible, withdrew
 From mortal adoration or regard,
 Not then was Deity engulfed ; nor Man,
 The rational creature, left, to feel the weight
 Of his own reason, without sense or thought

¹ 1827.

In nature

1814.

* Genesis iii. 24. —Ed.

† Genesis iii. 16, 17.—Ed.

‡ Exodus vi. 3.—Ed.

§ Exodus xxxiii. 9 ; xxxiv. 5.—Ed.

|| Exodus xxxvii. 1 ; Hebrews ix. 4.—Ed.

¶ Exodus xxv. 22.—Ed.

** Exodus xv. 25 ; xvi. 4, &c., &c.—Ed.

†† Exodus vii.-xi.—Ed.

Of higher reason and a purer will,
 To benefit and bless, through mightier power:—
 Whether the Persian—zealous to reject
 Altar and image, and the inclusive walls,
 And roofs of temples built by human hands—*
 To¹ loftiest heights ascending, from their tops,
 With myrtle-wreathed tiara on his brow,²
 Presented sacrifice to moon and stars,
 And to the winds and mother elements,
 And the whole circle of the heavens, for him
 A sensitive existence, and a God,†
 With lifted hands invoked, and songs of praise :
 Or, less reluctantly to bonds of sense
 Yielding his soul, the Babylonian framed
 For influence undefined a personal shape ;
 And, from the plain, with toil immense, upreared
 Tower eight times planted on the top of tower,
 That Belus, nightly to his splendid couch
 Descending, there might rest ;‡ upon that height³

¹ 1827.

The 1814.

² 1827.

. his brows, 1814.

³ 1827.

. ; and, from that Height
 Pure and serene, the Godhead overlook 1814.

* The ancient Persian religion was nature worship.—ED.

† Compare *Tintern Abbey*—

A motion and a spirit, that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. Vol. I. p. 269.—ED.

‡ Herodotus thus describes the temple of Belus :—“ . . . A square enclosure two furlongs each way, with gates of solid brass ; which were also remaining in my time. In the middle of the precinct there was a tower of solid masonry, a furlong in length and breadth, upon which was raised a second tower, and on that a third, and so up to eight. The ascent to the top is on the outside, by a path which winds round all the towers. When one is about half way up, one finds a resting place and seats, where persons are wont to sit some time in their way to the summit. On the

Pure and serene, diffused—to overlook
 Winding Euphrates, and the city vast
 Of his devoted worshippers, far-stretched,
 With grove and field and garden interspersed;
 Their town, and foodful region for support
 Against the pressure of beleaguering war.

Chaldean Shepherds, ranging trackless fields,
 Beneath the concave of unclouded skies
 Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,
 Looked on the polar star, as on a guide
 And guardian of their course, that never closed
 His stedfast eye. The planetary Five *
 With a submissive reverence they beheld;
 Watched, from the centre of their sleeping flocks,
 Those radiant Mercuries,† that seemed to move
 Carrying through ether, in perpetual round,
 Decrees and resolutions of the Gods;

topmost tower there is a spacious Temple, and inside the Temple stands a couch of unusual size, richly adorned, with a golden table by its side. There is no statue of any kind set up in the place. . . . The Chaldeans, the priests of this God, declare—but I, for my part, do not credit it—that the God comes down nightly into this chamber and sleeps upon the couch.”—Herodotus, I. 181. See Rawlinson’s version, Vol. I. p. 319-20. Compare also Josephus, Ant. Jud., X. 11, and Strabo, 16.—Ed.

* Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury—the only planets known to the ancients, the Earth not being included.—Ed.

† The reference here is still apparently to the “planetary Five,” which are *all* described as “radiant Mercuries” (although one of them was Mercury), because they all—

Seemed to move
 Carrying through ether, in perpetual round,
 Decrees and resolutions of the Gods;
 And, by their aspects, signifying works
 Of dim futurity,

This astrological allusion makes it clear that the reference is to the supposed “planetary influence,” and to the movements of these bodies—controlled by the gods—with which the fate of mortals was believed to be upbound. For an account of the Gods of the Five Planets, see *Chaldean Magic* by François Lenormant, pp. 26 and 118.—Ed.

And, by their aspects, signifying works
 Of dim futurity, to Man revealed.
 —The imaginative faculty was lord
 Of observations natural; and, thus
 Led on, those shepherds made report of stars
 In set rotation passing to and fro,
 Between the orbs of our apparent sphere
 And its invisible counterpart, adorned
 With answering constellations, under earth,
 Removed from all approach of living sight
 But present to the dead; who, so they deemed,
 Like those celestial messengers beheld
 All accidents, and judges were of all.

The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,
 Rivers and fertile plains, and sounding shores,—
 Under a cope of sky more variable,¹
 Could find commodious place for every God,
 Promptly received, as prodigally brought,
 From the surrounding countries, at the choice
 Of all adventurers. With unrivalled skill,
 As nicest observation furnished hints
 For studious fancy, his quick hand bestowed²
 On fluent operations a fixed shape;
 Metal or stone, idolatrously served.
 And yet—triumphant o'er this pompous show
 Of art, this palpable array of sense,
 On every side encountered; in despite
 Of the gross fictions chanted in the streets
 By wandering Rhapsodists;* and in contempt

¹ 1836.

Under a cope of variegated sky,

1814.

² 1836.

. did his hand bestow

1814.

* The wandering Greek minstrels from Homer onwards, predecessors of, the Troubadours.—Ed.

Of doubt and bold denial¹ hourly urged
 Amid the wrangling schools—a SPIRIT hung,
 Beautiful region ! o'er thy towns and farms,
 Statues and temples, and memorial tombs ;
 And emanations were perceived ; and acts
 Of immortality, in Nature's course,
 Exemplified by mysteries, that were felt
 As bonds, on grave philosopher imposed
 And armed warrior ; and in every grove
 A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed,
 When piety more awful had relaxed.
 —‘ Take, running river, take these locks of mine ’—
 Thus would the Votary say—‘ this severed hair,
 ‘ My vow fulfilling, do I here present,
 ‘ Thankful for my beloved child's return.
 ‘ Thy banks, Cephisus, he again hath trod,*
 ‘ Thy murmurs heard ; and drunk the crystal lymph
 ‘ With which thou dost refresh the thirsty lip,
 ‘ And, all day long, moisten these flowery fields !’²
 And, doubtless, sometimes, when the hair was shed
 Upon the flowing stream, a thought arose
 Of Life continuous, Being unimpaired ;
 That hath been, is, and where it was and is
 There shall endure,—existence unexposed³

¹ 1836.

. bold denials 1814.

² 1840.

“ And moisten all day long these flowery fields.” 1814.

³ 1827.There shall be,—seen, and heard, and felt, and known,
 And recognized,—existence unexposed 1814.

* A reference doubtless to Pausanias, I. 37, 3. “ Before you cross the Cephisus, there is the monument of Theodorus, who excelled all his contemporaries as an actor in tragedy ; and near to the river, there are [two] statues, one of Mnesimache, another of her son, in the act of cutting off his hair [over the stream and presenting it] as a votive offering to the Cephisus.” But see Note F in the Appendix to this volume.—ED.

To the blind walk of mortal accident ;
From diminution safe and weakening age ;
While man grows old, and dwindles, and decays ;
And countless generations of mankind
Depart ; and leave no vestige where they trod.

We live by Admiration, Hope, and Love ;
And, even as these are well and wisely fixed,
In dignity of being we ascend.
But what is error ? ” — “ Answer he who can ! ”
The Sceptic somewhat haughtily exclaimed :
“ Love, Hope, and Admiration—are they not
Mad Fancy’s favourite vassals ? Does not life
Use them, full oft, as pioneers to ruin,
Guides to destruction ? Is it well to trust
Imagination’s light when reason’s fails,
The unguarded taper where the guarded faints ?
—Stoop from those heights, and soberly declare
What error is ; and, of our errors, which
Doth most debase the mind ; the genuine seats
Of power, where are they ? Who shall regulate,
With truth, the scale of intellectual rank ? ”

“ Methinks,” persuasively the Sage replied,
“ That for this arduous office you possess
Some rare advantages. Your early days
A grateful recollection must supply
Of much exalted good by Heaven vouchsafed
To dignify the humblest state¹.—Your voice
Hath, in my hearing, often testified
That poor men’s children, they, and they alone,

¹ 1827.

Of much exalted good that may attend
Upon the very humblest state.— . . .

By their condition taught, can understand
 The wisdom of the prayer that daily asks
 For daily bread. A consciousness is yours
 How feelingly religion may be learned
 In smoky cabins, from a mother's tongue—
 Heard while the dwelling vibrates to the din
 Of the contiguous torrent, gathering strength
 At every moment—and, with strength, increase
 Of fury ; or, while snow is at the door,
 Assaulting and defending, and the wind,
 A sightless labourer, whistles at his work—
 Fearful ; but resignation tempers fear,
 And piety is sweet to infant minds.
 —The Shepherd-lad, that in the sunshine carves,¹
 On the green turf, a dial—to divide
 The silent hours ; and who to that report
 Can portion out his pleasures, and adapt,
 Throughout a long and lonely summer's day
 His round ² of pastoral duties, is not left
 With less intelligence for *moral* things
 Of gravest import. Early he perceives,
 Within himself, a measure and a rule,
 Which to the sun of truth he can apply,
 That shines for him, and shines for all mankind.
 Experience daily fixing his regards
 On nature's wants, he knows how few they are,
 And where they lie, how answered and appeased.
 This knowledge ample recompense affords
 For manifold privations ; he refers
 His notions to this standard ; on this rock

¹ 1836.

. . . , who in the sunshine carves, 1814.

² 1836.. . . , and adapt
 His round 1814.

Rests his desires ; and hence, in after life,
 Soul-strengthening patience, and sublime content.
 Imagination—not permitted here
 To waste her powers, as in the worldling's mind,
 On fickle pleasures, and superfluous cares,
 And trivial ostentation—is left free
 And puissant to range the solemn walks
 Of time and nature, girded by a zone
 That, while it binds, invigorates and supports.
 Acknowledge, then, that whether by the side
 Of his poor hut, or on the mountain top,
 Or in the cultured field, a Man so bred ¹
 (Take from him what you will upon the score
 Of ignorance or illusion) lives and breathes
 For noble purposes of mind : his heart
 Beats to the heroic song of ancient days ;
 His eye distinguishes, his soul creates.
 And those illusions, which excite the scorn
 Or move the pity of unthinking minds,
 Are they not mainly outward ministers
 Of inward conscience ? with whose service charged
 They came and go, appeared and disappear, ²
 Diverting evil purposes, remorse
 Awakening, chastening an intemperate grief,
 Or pride of heart abating : and, whene'er
 For less important ends those phantoms move,
 Who would forbid them, if their presence serve,
 On thinly-peopled mountains and wild heaths, ³

¹ 1827.

. , a Man like this 1814.

² 1832.

They come and go, appear and disappear ; 1814.

³ 1849.

Among wild mountains and unpeopled heaths, 1814.

Among wild hills, and thinly-peopled shores. C.

Filling a space, else vacant—to exalt
The forms of Nature, and enlarge her powers?

Once more to distant ages of the world
Let us revert, and place before our thoughts
The face which rural solitude might wear
To the unenlightened swains of pagan Greece.¹
—In that fair clime, the lonely herdsman, stretched
On the soft grass through half a summer's day,
With music lulled his indolent repose:
And, in some fit of weariness, if he,
When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear
A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetched,
Even from the blazing chariot of the sun,
A beardless Youth, who touched a golden lute,*
And filled the illumined groves with ravishment.
The nightly hunter lifting a bright eye
Up towards the crescent moon,² with grateful heart
Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed
That timely light, to share his joyous sport:³

¹ 1814-1845.

Once more to distant ages of the world
Let us revert and contemplate the face,
That face which rural solitude might wear
To the unenlightened sons of pagan Greece.
Which Nature in her solitudes might wear.

C.

C.

² 1836.

., lifting up his eyes
Towards the crescent Moon,

1814.

³ 1814-1849.

Helped by the reflection of her own fair face,
Or rather say the lover at her side,
Looking with earnest eyes into the depth

And hence, a beaming Goddess with her Nymphs,*
 Across the lawn and through the darksome grove,
 Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes
 By echo multiplied from rock or cave,
 Swept in the storm of chase; as moon and stars
 Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven,¹
 When winds are blowing strong. The traveller slaked
 His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thanked
 The Naiad.† Sunbeams, upon distant hills
 Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
 Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
 Into fleet Oreads† sporting visibly.
 The Zephyrs† fanning, as they passed, their wings,
 Lacked not, for love, fair objects whom they wooed
 With gentle whisper. Withered boughs grotesque,
 Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
 From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
 In the low vale, or on steep mountain side;
 And, sometimes, intermixed with stirring horns
 Of the live deer, or goat's depending beard,—

Of a still lake amid the glimmering growth
 Of plants that there were nourished.

c.

Helped by reflection of her own fair face,
 Or, if not she, the lover at her side,
 Some beautiful inhabitant who there
 Might dwell in calm security unknown
 To mortal credence. Hence the green haired brood. c.

¹ 1827.

heavens,

1814.

* Diana.—Ed.

† The *naiádes* (water-nymphs) and *ópeládes* (mountain-nymphs), with others of the meadows, woods, and dales, sprung from the fertile imagination of the Greeks. Wordsworth's explanation of the origin of these myths from natural causes is not peculiar to him, although his line are a *locus classicus* on the subject; but his explanation of the "lurking Satyrs," as due to the sight of the horns of the deer or the goats in the woods, is probably his own.—Ed.

These were the lurking Satyrs* a wild brood
Of gamesome Deities ; or Pan himself,
The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring God !"

The strain was aptly chosen ; and I could mark¹
Its kindly influence, o'er the yielding brow²
Of our Companion, gradually diffused ;
While, listening, he had paced the noiseless turf,
Like one whose untired ear a murmuring stream
Detains ; but tempted now to interpose,
He with a smile exclaimed :—

" 'Tis well you speak

At a safe distance from our native land,
And from the mansions where our youth was taught.
The true descendants of those godly men
Who swept from Scotland, in a flame of zeal,
Shrine, altar, image, and the massy piles
That harboured them,—the souls retaining yet
The churlish features of that after race³
Who fled to woods, caverns, and jutting rocks,³
In deadly scorn of superstitious rites,
Or what their scruples construed to be such—
How, think you, would they tolerate this scheme
Of fine propensities, that tends, if urged
Far as it might be urged, to sow afresh
The weeds of Romish phantasy, in vain
Uprooted ; would re-consecrate our wells

¹ 1849.

No apter Strain could have been chosen ; I marked 1814.

As this apt strain proceeded, I could mark 1827.

² 1827.

. . . . , on the yielding brow 1814.

³ 1836.

Who fled to caves, and woods, and naked rocks 1814.

* See the note † on the preceding page.—Ed.

To good Saint Fillan* and to fair Saint Anne;
 And from long banishment recall Saint Giles,†
 To watch again with tutelary love
 O'er stately Edinburgh throned on crags?
 A blessed restoration,‡ to behold
 The patron, on the shoulders of his priests,
 Once more parading through her crowded streets
 Now simply guarded by the sober powers
 Of science, and philosophy, and sense!"

This answer followed.—"You have turned my thoughts
 Upon our brave Progenitors, who rose
 Against idolatry with warlike mind,
 And shrunk from vain observances, to lurk
 In woods, and dwell under impending rocks
 Ill-sheltered, and oft wanting fire and food;¹

¹ 1849.

In caves, and woods, and under dismal rocks,
 Deprived of shelter, covering, fire, and food;

1814.

* St Fillan. There were two Scottish saints of that name. The first, and most famous, the particulars of whose life are recorded in the Breviary of Aberdeen, Felanus, or Fœlanus, Fælan, Fillanus, Filane, or Phillane, the son of Kentigern. In Perthshire, the scene of his labours, a river and a strath are called after him, and a Church dedicated to him. He was associated with the battle of Bannockburn. (See *Calendars of Scottish Saints*, by A. P. Forbes, Bishop of Brechin.)—ED.

† For the legendary History of St Giles see the breviary of the Roman Church. (It has been translated recently by the Marquis of Bute.) Dr Cameron Lees, minister of St Giles' Cathedral Church, Edinburgh, sends me the following notice of the Saint:—"How St Giles became the patron Saint of Edinburgh is not known. His 'hind' is upon the arms of the city.* An arm bone of St Giles was one of the chief treasures of the church. It was brought from France by Preston of Gorton, who procured it by the 'assistance of the King of France.' This relic was contained in a richly jewelled shrine, and carried through Edinburgh in procession on the Saint's day, the 1st September. An account of this procession is given by Sir D. Lindsay and by Knox. The only other church in Scotland under the dedication of St Giles was at Elgin."—ED.

‡ Now happily accomplished through the labour and the munificence of the late Dr Chambers.—ED.

* For reference to the "hind," see the Breviary.—ED.

Why?—for this very reason that they felt,
 And did acknowledge, wheresoe'er they moved,
 A spiritual presence, oft-times misconceived,
 But still a high dependence, a divine
 Bounty and government, that filled their hearts
 With joy, and gratitude, and fear, and love ;
 And from their fervent lips drew hymns of praise,
 That through the desert rang.¹ Though favoured less,
 Far less, than these, yet such, in their degree,
 Were those bewildered Pagans of old time.
 Beyond their own poor natures and above
 They looked ; were humbly thankful for the good
 Which the warm sun solicited, and earth
 Bestowed ; were gladsome,—and their moral sense
 They fortified with reverence for the Gods ;
 And they had hopes that overstepped the Grave.

Now, shall our great Discoverers," he exclaimed,
 Raising his voice triumphantly, " obtain
 From sense and reason less than these obtained,
 Though far misled ? Shall men for whom our age
 Unbaffled powers of vision hath prepared,
 To explore the world without and world within,
 Be joyless as the blind ? Ambitious spirits—²
 Whom earth, at this late season, hath produced
 To regulate the moving spheres, and weigh
 The planets in the hollow of their hand ;
 And they who rather dive than soar, whose pains
 Have solved the elements, or analysed

In woods, and dwell beneath impending rocks
 Ill-sheltered, and oft wanting fire and food ; 1836.

¹ 1827.

With which the deserts rang. . . . 1814.

² 1836.

. Ambitious Souls— 1814.

The thinking principle—shall they in fact
 Prove a degraded Race? and what avails
 Renown, if their presumption make them such?
 Oh! there is laughter at their work in heaven!
 Inquire of ancient Wisdom; go, demand
 Of mighty Nature, if 'twas ever meant
 That we should pry far off yet be unraised;
 That we should pore, and dwindle as we pore,
 Viewing all objects unremittingly
 In disconnection dead and spiritless;
 And still dividing, and dividing still,
 Break down all grandeur, still unsatisfied
 With the perverse attempt, while littleness
 May yet become more little; waging thus
 An impious warfare with the very life
 Of our own souls!

And if indeed there be
 An all-pervading Spirit, upon whom
 Our dark foundations rest, could he design
 That this¹ magnificent effect of power,
 The earth we tread, the sky that we behold²
 By day, and all the pomp which night reveals;
 That these—and that superior mystery
 Our vital frame, so fearfully devised,
 And the dread soul within it—should exist
 Only to be examined, pondered, searched,
 Probed, vexed; and criticised? *—Accuse me not
 Of arrogance, unknown Wanderer as I am,

¹ 1827.

. could He design,
 Or will his rites and services permit,
 That this

1814.

² 1827.

. which we behold

1814.

If, having walked with Nature threescore years,
 And offered, far as frailty would allow,
 My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
 I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
 Whom I have served, that their DIVINITY
 Revolts, offended at the ways of men
 Swayed by such motives, to such ends employed ;¹
 Philosophers, who, though the human soul
 Be ² of a thousand faculties composed,
 And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
 This soul, and the transcendent universe,
 No more than as a mirror that reflects
 To proud Self-love her own intelligence ;
 That one, poor, finite object, in the abyss
 Of infinite Being, twinkling restlessly !

Nor higher place can be assigned to him
 And his compeers—the laughing Sage of France.—*
 Crowned was he, if my memory do not err,³
 With laurel planted upon hoary hairs,
 In sign of conquest by his wit achieved
 And benefits his wisdom had conferred ;
 His stooping body tottered with wreaths of flowers †

¹ 1836.

. end employed 1814.

² 1827.. , when the human soul
 Is 1814.³ 1827.

. doth not err, 1814.

* Voltaire.—ED.

† In his eighty-fourth year, Voltaire went up to Paris from Ferney in Switzerland (where he had lived for twenty years), and amid the tumultuous enthusiasm of the Parisians, he was crowned at the Comédie Française, as the Athenian poets used to be. “The Court of the Louvre, vast as it is, was full of people waiting for him. As soon as his notable vehicle came in sight, the cry arose, *Le Voila !* The Savoyards, the apple-women, all the

Opprest, far less becoming ornaments
 Than Spring oft twines about a mouldering tree ;¹
 Yet so it pleased a fond, a vain, old Man,
 And a most frivolous people. Him I mean
 Who penned,² to ridicule confiding faith,
 This sorry Legend ; which by chance we found
 Piled in a nook, through malice, as might seem,
 Among more innocent rubbish."—Speaking thus,
 With a brief notice when, and how, and where,
 We had espied the book, he drew it forth ;
 And courteously, as if the act removed,
 At once, all traces from the good Man's heart
 Of unbenign aversion or contempt,
 Restored it to its owner. "Gentle Friend,"
 Herewith he grasped the Solitary's hand,
 "You have known lights and guides better than these.³
 Ah ! let not aught amiss within dispose

¹ 1848.

His tottering Body was oppressed with flowers ;
 Far less becoming ornaments than those
 With which Spring often decks a mouldering Tree ! 1814.

His tottering body was with wreaths of flowers
 Opprest, far less becoming ornaments
 Than spring oft twines about a mouldering tree : 1827.

² 1827.

Who framed, 1814.

³ 1849.

"You have known better Lights and Guides than
 these—

1814.

rabble of the quarter had assembled there, and the acclamations *Vive Voltaire!* resounded as if they would never end. . . . There was no end till he placed himself on the front seat, beside the ladies. Then rose a cry *La Couronne!* and Brizard, the actor, came and put the garland on his head. *Ah Dieu ! vous voulez donc me faire mourir ?* cried M. de Voltaire, weeping with joy, and resisting the honour. . . . The Prince de Beauvan, seizing the laurel, replaced it on the head of our Sophocles, who could refuse no longer." (*Memoires sur Voltaire, par Longchamp et Wagniere.*)

—Ed.

A noble mind to practise on herself,
 And tempt opinion to support the wrongs
 Of passion: whatsoe'er be felt or feared,¹
 From higher judgment-seats make no appeal
 To lower: can you question that the soul
 Inherits an allegiance, not by choice
 To be cast off, upon an oath proposed
 By each new upstart notion? In the ports
 Of levity no refuge can be found,
 No shelter, for a spirit in distress.
 He, who by wilful disesteem of life
 And proud insensibility to hope,
 Affronts the eye of Solitude, shall learn
 That her mild nature can be terrible;
 That neither she nor Silence lack the power
 To avenge their own insulted majesty.

O blest seclusion! when the mind admits
 The law of duty; and can therefore move²
 Through each vicissitude of loss and gain,
 Linked in entire complacence with her choice;
 When youth's presumptuousness is mellowed down,
 And manhood's vain anxiety dismissed;
 When wisdom shows her seasonable fruit,
 Upon the boughs of sheltering leisure hung
 In sober plenty; when the spirit stoops
 To drink with gratitude the crystal stream
 Of unreprieved enjoyment; and is pleased
 To muse, and be saluted by the air
 Of meek repentance, wafting wall-flower scents

¹ 1827.

. . . : whatsoe'er is felt or feared,

1814.

² 1827.

. . . ; and thereby can live,

1814.

From out the crumbling ruins of fallen pride
 And chambers of transgression, now forlorn.
 O, calm contented days, and peaceful nights !
 Who, when such good can be obtained, would strive
 To reconcile his manhood to a couch
 Soft, as may seem, but, under that disguise,
 Stuffed with the thorny substance of the past
 For fixed annoyance ; and full oft beset
 With floating dreams, black and disconsolate,¹
 The vapoury phantoms of futurity ?

Within the soul a faculty abides,
 That with interpositions, which would hide
 And darken, so can deal that they become
 Contingencies of pomp ; and serve to exalt
 Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
 In the deep stillness of a summer even
 Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
 Burns, like an unconsuming fire of light,
 In the green trees ; and, kindling ^{*}on all sides
 Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
 Into a substance glorious as her own,
 Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
 Capacious and serene. Like power abides
 In man's celestial spirit ; virtue thus
 Sets forth and magnifies herself ; thus feeds
 A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
 From the encumbrances of mortal life,
 From error, disappointment—nay, from guilt ;
 And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,
 From palpable oppressions of despair.”

¹ 1836.

. . . . , disconsolate and black,

The Solitary by these words was touched
 With manifest emotion, and exclaimed ;
 " But how begin ? and whence ?—' The Mind is free—
 Resolve,' the haughty Moralist would say,
 ' This single act is all that we demand.'
 Alas ! such wisdom bids a creature fly
 Whose very sorrow is, that time hath shorn
 His natural wings !—To friendship let him turn
 For succour ; but perhaps he sits alone
 On stormy waters, tossed in a little boat¹
 That holds but him, and can contain no more !
 Religion tells of amity sublime
 Which no condition can preclude ; of One
 Who sees all suffering, comprehends all wants,
 All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs :
 But is that bounty absolute ?—His gifts,
 Are they not, still, in some degree, rewards
 For acts of service ? Can his love extend
 To hearts that own not him ? Will showers of grace,
 When in the sky no promise may be seen,
 Fall to refresh a parched and withered land ?
 Or shall the groaning Spirit cast her load
 At the Redeemer's feet ? "

In rueful tone,
 With some impatience in his mien, he spake :
 Back to my mind rushed all that had been urged
 To calm the Sufferer when his story closed ;
 I looked for counsel as unbending now ;
 But a discriminating sympathy
 Stooped to this apt reply :—²

¹ 1836.

On stormy waters, in a little Boat

1814.

² 1827.

In rueful tone,
 With some impatience in his mien he spake ;
 And this reply was given.—

1814.

“ As men from men

Do, in the constitution of their souls,
Differ, by mystery not to be explained ;
And as we fall by various ways, and sink
One deeper than another, self-condemned,
Through manifold degrees of guilt and shame ;
So manifold and various are the ways
Of restoration, fashioned to the steps
Of all infirmity, and tending all
To the same point, attainable by all—
Peace in ourselves, and union with our God.
For you, assuredly, a hopeful road¹
Lies open : we have heard from you a voice
At every moment softened in its course
By tenderness of heart ; have seen your eye,
Even like an altar lit by fire from heaven,
Kindle before us.—Your discourse this day,
That, like the fabled Lethe, wished to flow
In creeping sadness, through oblivious shades
Of death and night, has caught at every turn
The colours of the sun. Access for you
Is yet preserved to principles of truth,
Which the imaginative Will upholds
In seats of wisdom, not to be approached
By the inferior Faculty that moulds,
With her minute and speculative pains,
Opinion, ever changing !

I have seen

A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell ;

¹ 1827.

—For Him, to whom I speak, an easy road

To which, in silence hushed, his very soul¹
 Listened intensely ; and his countenance soon
 Brightened with joy ; for from within were heard
 Murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed²
 Mysterious union with its native sea.
 Even such a shell* the universe itself
 Is to the ear of Faith ; and there are times,
 I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
 Authentic tidings of invisible things ;
 Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power ;
 And central peace, subsisting at the heart
 Of endless agitation. Here you stand,
 Adore, and worship, when you know it not ;
 Pious beyond the intention of your thought ;
 Devout above the meaning of your will.
 —Yes, you have felt, and may not cease to feel.
 The estate of man would be indeed forlorn
 If false conclusions of the reasoning power
 Made the eye blind, and closed the passages
 Through which the ear converses with the heart.
 Has not the soul, the being of your life,

¹ 1814-1849.

And while in silence hushed C.

² 1849.

Brightened with joy ; for murmurings from within
 Were heard,—sonorous cadences ! whereby,
 To his belief, the Monitor expressed

1814.

* Compare Walter Savage Landor—

“ But I have sinuous shells of pearly hue
 Within, and they that lustre have imbibed
 In the Sun’s palace-porch, where when unyoked
 His chariot-wheel stands midway in the wave :
 Shake me and it awakens, then apply
 Its polished lips to your attentive ear
 And it remembers its august abodes,
 And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.”

, (Gebir, Book I.)—ED.

Received a shock of awful consciousness,
 In some calm season, when these lofty rocks
 At night's approach bring down the unclouded sky,
 To rest upon their circumambient walls ;
 A temple framing of dimensions vast,
 And yet not too enormous for the sound
 Of human anthems,—choral song, or burst
 Sublime of instrumental harmony,
 To glorify the Eternal ! What if these
 Did never break the stillness that prevails
 Here,—if the solemn nightingale* be mute,
 And the soft woodlark here did never chant
 Her vespers,*—Nature fails not to provide
 Impulse and utterance. The whispering air
 Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights,
 And blind recesses of the caverned rocks ;
 The little rills, and waters numberless,
 Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes
 With the loud streams : and often, at the hour
 When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
 Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
 One voice—the solitary raven, flying
 Athwart the concave of the dark blue dome,
 Unseen, perchance above all power of sight—¹
 An iron knell ! with echoes from afar
 Faint—and still fainter—as the cry, with which
 The wanderer accompanies her flight
 Through the calm region, fades upon the ear,
 Diminishing by distance till it seemed

¹ 1827.

. above the power of sight

1814.

* The nightingale is not heard farther north than the Trent valley, and there are no woodlarks in the Lake country, as hawks are numerous.
 —Ed.

To expire ; yet from the abyss is caught again,
And yet again recovered !*

But descending
From these imaginative heights, that yield
Far-stretching views into eternity,
Acknowledge that to Nature's humbler power
Your cherished sullenness is forced to bend
Even here, where her amenities are sown
With sparing hand. Then trust yourself abroad
To range her blooming bowers, and spacious fields,
Where on the labours of the happy throng
She smiles, including in her wide embrace
City, and town, and tower,—and sea with ships
Sprinkled ;—be our Companion while we track
Her rivers populous with gliding life ;
While, free as air, o'er printless sands we march,
Or pierce¹ the gloom of her majestic woods ;
Roaming, or resting under grateful shade
In peace and meditative cheerfulness ;
Where living things, and things inanimate,
Do speak, at Heaven's command, to eye and ear,

¹ 1827.

And pierce

1814.

* The following occurs in Miss Wordsworth's Grasmere Journal, July 26, 1800 :—"After tea, we rowed down to Loughrigg Fell, visited the white foxglove, gathered wild strawberries, and walked up to view Rydale. We lay a long time looking at the lake. The shores all with the scorching sun. The ferns were turning yellow—that is, here and there was one quite turned. We walked round by Benson's woodhouse. The lake was now most still, and reflected the beautiful yellow, and blue, and purple, and grey colours of the sky. We heard a strange sound in the Bainrigg's wood, as we were floating on the water. It seemed in the wood, but it must have been above it, for presently we saw a raven very high above us. It called out, and the dome of the sky seemed to echo the sound. It called again and again, as it flew onwards, and the mountains gave back the sound, sending as if from their centre a musical bell-like answering to the bird's hoarse voice. We heard both the call of the bird, and the echo after we could see him no longer."—ED.

And speak to social reason's inner sense,
With inarticulate language.

For, the Man—

Who, in this spirit, communes with the Forms
Of nature, who with understanding heart
Both knows and loves¹ such objects as excite
No morbid passions, no disquietude,
No vengeance, and no hatred—needs must feel
The joy of that pure principle of love
So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose
But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
Accordingly he by degrees perceives
His feelings of aversion softened down ;
A holy tenderness pervade his frame.
His sanity of reason not impaired,
Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,
From a clear fountain flowing, he looks round
And seeks for good ; and finds the good he seeks :
Until abhorrence and contempt are things
He only knows by name ; and, if he hear,
From other mouths, the language which they speak,
He is compassionate ; and has no thought,
No feeling, which can overcome his love.

And further ; by contemplating these Forms
In the relations which they bear to man,
He shall discern, how, through the various means
Which silently they yield, are multiplied
The spiritual presences of absent things.

¹ 1836.

Trust me,¹ that for the instructed, time will come
 When they shall meet no object but may teach
 Some acceptable lesson to their minds
 Of human suffering, or of human joy.
 So shall they learn, while all things speak of man,
 Their duties from all forms;² and general laws,
 And local accidents, shall tend alike
 To rouse, to urge; and, with the will, confer
 The ability to spread the blessings wide
 Of true philanthropy. The light of love
 Not failing, perseverance from their steps
 Departing not, for them shall be confirmed³
 The glorious habit by which sense is made
 Subservient still to moral purposes,
 Auxiliar to divine. That change shall clothe
 The naked spirit, ceasing to deplore
 The burthen of existence. Science then
 Shall be a precious visitant; and then,
 And only then, be worthy of her name:
 For then her heart shall kindle; her dull eye,
 Dull and inanimate, no more shall hang
 Chained to its object in brute slavery;
 But taught with patient interest to watch
 The processes of things, and serve the cause
 Of order and distinctness, not for this
 Shall it forget that its most noble use,

¹ 1827.

. of absent Things,
 Convoked by knowledge; and for his delight
 Still ready to obey the gentle call.

Trust me, 1814.

² 1827.

From them shall all things speak of Man, they read
 Their duties in all forms; 1814.

³ 1827.

Departing not, they shall at length obtain 1814.

Its most illustrious province, must be found
 In furnishing clear guidance, a support
 Not treacherous, to the mind's *excursive* power.
 —So build we up the Being that we are;
 Thus deeply drinking-in the soul of things,
 We shall be wise perforce; and, while inspired
 By choice, and conscious that the Will is free,
 Shall move unswerving, even as if impelled¹
 By strict necessity, along the path
 Of order and of good. Whate'er we see,
 Or feel, shall tend to quicken and refine;²
 Shall fix, in calmer seats of moral strength,
 Earthly desires; and raise, to loftier heights
 Of divine love, our intellectual soul."

Here closed the Sage that eloquent harangue,
 Poured forth with fervour in continuous stream,
 Such as, remote, mid savage wilderness,
 An Indian Chief discharges from his breast

¹ 1836.

Unswerving shall we move, as if impelled

1814.

² 1849.

. Whate'er we see,
 Whate'er we feel, by agency direct
 Or indirect shall tend to feed and nurse
 Our faculties, shall fix in calmer seats
 Of moral strength, and raise to loftier heights
 Of love divine, our intellectual Soul."

1814.

Whate'er we feel, shall tend to feed and nurse,
 By agency direct or indirect,

.

 Of divine love,

1836.

. Whate'er we see
 Or feel shall tend to quicken and refine
 The humbler functions of corporeal sense.

C.

Into the hearing of assembled tribes,¹
 In open circle seated round, and hushed
 As the unbreathing air, when not a leaf
 Stirs in the mighty woods.—So did he speak :
 The words he uttered shall not pass away
 Dispersed, like music that the wind takes up
 By snatches, and lets fall, to be forgotten ;
 No—they sank into me² the bounteous gift
 Of one whom time and nature had made wise,
 Gracing his doctrine³ with authority
 Which hostile spirits silently allow ;
 Of one accustomed to desires that feed
 On fruitage gathered from the tree of life ;
 To hopes on knowledge and experience built ;
 Of one in whom persuasion and belief
 Had ripened into faith, and faith become
 A passionate intuition ; whence the Soul,
 Though bound to earth by ties of pity and love,
 From all injurious servitude was free.

The Sun, before his place of rest were reached,
 Had yet to travel far, but unto us,
 To us who stood low in that hollow dell,
 He had become invisible,—a pomp
 Leaving behind of yellow radiance spread
 Over⁴ the mountain sides, in contrast bold
 With ample shadows, seemingly, no less

¹ 1827.

. . . . of the assembled Tribes 1814.

² 1836.. . . . shall not pass away ;
For they sank into me— . . . 1814.³ 1836.

Gracing his language . . . 1814.

⁴ 1836.

Upon . . . 1814.

Than those resplendent lights, his rich bequest ;
 A dispensation of his evening power.
 —Adown the path that ¹ from the glen had led
 The funeral train, the Shepherd and his Mate
 Were seen descending :—forth to greet them ran ²
 Our little Page : the rustic pair approach ;
 And in the Matron's countenance may be read
 Plain indication ³ that the words, which told
 How that neglected Pensioner was sent
 Before his time into a quiet grave,
 Had done to her humanity no wrong :
 But we are kindly welcomed—promptly served
 With ostentatious zeal.—Along the floor
 Of the small Cottage in the lonely Dell
 A grateful couch was spread for our repose ;
 Where, in the guise of mountaineers, we lay, ⁴
 Stretched upon fragrant heath, and lulled by sound
 Of far-off torrents charming the still night,
 And, to tired limbs and over-busy thoughts,
 Inviting sleep and soft forgetfulness. ⁵

¹ 1827.

—Adown the path which . . . 1814.

² 1827.

. . . ;—forth in transport ran 1814.

³ 1849.. . . aspect may be read
 A plain assurance . . . 1814.⁴ 1849.

. . . we slept, 1814.

⁵ Added in c.

Till every thought as gently as a flower,
 That shuts its eyes at close of every day
 Had folded up itself in dreamless sleep.*

* With this compare *The Prelude*, Book I.—

“Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.”

—(Vol. III. p. 146.)—Ed.

Book Fifth.

THE PASTOR.

ARGUMENT.

Farewell to the Valley—Reflections—A large and populous Vale described¹—The Pastor's Dwelling, and some account of him²—Church and Monuments—The Solitary musing, and where—Roused—In the Churchyard the Solitary communicates the thoughts which had recently passed through his mind—Lofty tone of the Wanderer's discourse of yesterday adverted to—Rite of Baptism, and the professions accompanying it, contrasted with the real state of human life—Apology for the Rite³—Inconsistency of the best men—Acknowledgment that practice falls far below the injunctions of duty as existing in the mind—General complaint of a falling-off in the value of life after the time of youth—Outward appearances of content and happiness in degree illusive—Pastor approaches—Appeal made to him—His answer—Wanderer in sympathy with him—Suggestion that the least ambitious enquirers may be most free from error—The Pastor is desired to give some portraits of the living or dead from his own observation of life among these Mountains—and for what purpose—Pastor consents—Mountain cottage—Excellent qualities of its Inhabitants—Solitary expresses his pleasure; but denies the praise of virtue to worth of this kind—Feelings of the Priest before he enters upon his account of persons interred in the Churchyard—Graves of unbaptized Infants—Funeral and sepulchral observances, whence—Ecclesiastical Establishments, whence derived—Profession of belief in the doctrine of immortality.

¹ 1836.

Sight of a large and populous Vale—Solitary consents to go forward—Vale described—

1814.

2

The Church-yard—

1814.

3

Apology for the rite—

1836.

“FAREWELL, deep Valley, with thy one rude House,
And its small lot of life-supporting fields,
And guardian rocks!—Farewell, attractive seat!¹
To the still influx of the morning light

¹ 1827.

And guardian rocks!—with unreverted eyes
I cannot pass thy bounds, attractive seat!

1814.

Open, and day's pure cheerfulness, but veiled
 From human observation,* as if yet
 Primeval forests wrapped thee round with dark
 Impenetrable shade; once more farewell,
 Majestic circuit, beautiful abyss,
 By Nature destined from the birth of things
 For quietness profound!"

Upon the side

Of that brown ridge, sole outlet of the vale †
 Which foot of boldest stranger would attempt,
 Linger¹ behind my comrades, thus I breathed
 A parting tribute to a spot that seemed
 Like the fixed centre of a troubled world.
 Again I halted with reverted eyes;
 The chain that would not slacken, was at length
 Snapt,—and, pursuing leisurely my way,
 How vain, thought I, is it by change of place²
 To seek that comfort which the mind denies;
 Yet trial and temptation oft are shunned
 Wisely; and by such tenure do we hold³
 Frail life's possessions, that even they whose fate
 Yields no peculiar reason of complaint

¹ 1836.

Upon the side	
Of that green Slope, the outlet of the Vale,	
Linger	1814.
Of that brown slope,	1827.

² 1836.

. of a troubled World.	
And now, pursuing leisurely my way,	
How vain, thought I, it is by change of place	1814.

³ 1827.

Wisely; and by such tenor do we hold	1814.
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* The "semicirque of turf-clad ground," where the conversations recorded in Books III. and IV. had been carried on.—ED.

† Towards little Langdale.—ED.

Might, by the promise that is here, be won
 To steal from active duties, and embrace
 Obscurity, and undisturbed repose.¹
 —Knowledge, methinks, in these disordered times,
 Should be allowed a privilege to have
 Her anchorites, like piety of old ; *
 Men, who, from faction sacred, and unstained
 By war, might, if so minded, turn aside
 Uncensured, and subsist, a scattered few
 Living to God and nature, and content
 With that communion. Consecrated be
 The spots where such abide ! But happier still
 The Man, whom, furthermore, a hope attends
 That meditation and research may guide
 His privacy to principles and powers *
 Discovered or invented ; or set forth,
 Through his acquaintance with the ways of truth,
 In lucid order ; so that, when his course
 Is run, some faithful eulogist may say,
 He sought not praise, and praise did overlook
 His unobtrusive merit ; but his life,
 Sweet to himself, was exercised in good
 That shall survive his name and memory.

Acknowledgments of gratitude sincere
 Accompanied these musings ; fervent thanks
 For my own peaceful lot and happy choice ;
 A choice that from the passions of the world
 Withdrew, and fixed me in a still retreat ;

¹ 1849.

Obscurity, and calm forgetfulness.

1814.

* See Mr Arnold's address as President of the Wordsworth Society, 1883.—Ed.

Sheltered, but not to social duties lost,
 Secluded, but not buried ; and with song
 Cheering my days, and with industrious thought ;
 With the ever-welcome¹ company of books ;
 With² virtuous friendship's soul-sustaining aid,
 And with the blessings of domestic love.

Thus occupied in mind I paced along,
 Following the rugged road, by sledge or wheel
 Worn in the moorland,* till I overtook
 My two Associates, in the morning sunshine
 Halting together on a rocky knoll,
 Whence the bare road descended rapidly³
 To the green meadows of another vale.†

Here did our pensive Host put forth his hand
 In sign of farewell. "Nay," the old Man said,
 "The fragrant air its coolness still retains ;
 The herds and flocks are yet abroad to crop
 The dewy grass ; you cannot leave us now,
 We must not part at this inviting hour."
 He yielded,⁴ though reluctant ; for his mind

¹ 1814.

With ever-welcome 1827.
 The text of 1836 returns to that of 1814.

² 1836.

By 1814.

³ 1849.

From which the road descended rapidly 1814.

⁴ 1827.

To that injunction, earnestly expressed,
 He yielded, 1814.

* The sledge used for bringing down peats or bracken from the uplands. The "sledge" has not yet entirely given way to the "wheel," many of the Westmoreland peasants still using it, when bringing down their winter stores of fuel and bedding, as they do in Norway.—ED.

† The vale of little Langdale.—ED.

Instinctively disposed him to retire
To his own covert ; as a billow, heaved
Upon the beach, rolls back into the sea.
—So we descend : and winding round a rock
Attain a point that showed the valley—stretched
In length before us ; * and, not distant far,
Upon a rising ground a grey church-tower,*
Whose battlements were screened by tufted trees.
And towards a crystal Mere, that lay beyond
Among steep hills and woods embosomed, flowed
A copious stream with boldly-winding course ;
Here traceable, there hidden—there again
To sight restored, and glittering in the sun.
On the stream's bank, and every where, appeared
Fair dwellings, single, or in social knots ;
Some scattered o'er the level, others perched
On the hill sides, a cheerful quiet scene,
Now in its morning purity arrayed.

“As 'mid some happy valley of the Alps,”
Said I, “once happy, ere tyrannic power,
Wantonly breaking in upon the Swiss,
Destroyed their unoffending commonwealth,

* “After we quit his cottage, passing over a low ridge, we descend into another Vale, that of Little Langdale, towards the head of which stands embowered, or partly shaded by yews and other trees, something between a cottage and a mansion, or gentleman's house, such as they once were in this country. This I convert into the parsonage, and at the same time, and as by the waving of a magic wand, I turn the comparatively confined Vale of Langdale, its tarn, and the rude chapel which once adorned the valley, into the stately and comparatively spacious Vale of Grasmere and its ancient parish church.”—I. F. MS. The Fenwick note is not quite clear as to the relation of Hackett to Blea Tarn Cottage. Dr Cradock thinks that “Wordsworth meant that his description of the cottage was borrowed from Hackett (which he frequently visited), so far at least as the solitary clock, and the cottage stairs, and the dark and low apartments were concerned.”—Ed.

A popular equality reigns here,
 Save for yon stately House * beneath whose roof
 A rural lord might dwell."—"No feudal pomp,
 Or power," replied the Wanderer, "to that House
 Belongs, but there in his allotted Home
 Abides, from year to year, a genuine Priest,¹
 The shepherd of his flock; or, as a king
 Is styled, when most affectionately praised,
 The father of his people. Such is he;
 And rich and poor, and young and old, rejoice
 Under his spiritual sway. He hath vouchsafed²
 To me some portion of a kind regard;
 And something also of his inner mind
 Hath he imparted—but I speak of him
 As he is known to all.

The calm delights

Of unambitious piety he chose,
 And learning's solid dignity; though born
 Of knightly race, nor wanting powerful friends.

¹ 1849.

A popular equality doth seem
 Here to prevail; and yet a House of State
 Stands yonder, one beneath whose roof, methinks,
 A rural Lord might dwell." "No feudal pomp,"
 Replied our Friend, a Chronicler who stood

Where'er he moved upon familiar ground,
 "Nor feudal power is there; but there abides,
 In his allotted Home a genuine Priest, 1814.

A popular equality reigns here
 Save for one house of State beneath whose roof 1827.

² 1827.

Under his spiritual sway, collected round him
 In this sequestered realm. He hath vouchsafed 1814.

* See the note on the previous page.—ED.

Hither,¹ in prime of manhood, he withdrew
 From academic bowers. He loved the spot—
 Who does not love his native soil?—he prized
 The ancient rural character, composed
 Of simple manners, feelings unsupprest
 And undisguised, and strong and serious thought;
 A character reflected in himself,
 With such embellishment as well beseems
 His rank and sacred function. This deep vale
 Winds far in reaches hidden from our sight,
 And one a turreted manorial hall
 Adorns, in which the good Man's ancestors
 Have dwelt through ages—Patrons of this Cure.
 To them, and to his own judicious pains,²
 The Vicar's dwelling, and the whole domain,
 Owes that presiding aspect which might well
 Attract your notice; statelier than could else
 Have been bestowed, through course of common chance,³
 On an unwealthy mountain Benefice.”

This said, oft pausing,⁴ we pursued our way;

¹ 1827.

This good to reap, these pleasures to secure,
 Hither,

1814.

² 1836.

. This deep vale
 Is lengthened out by many a winding reach,
 Not visible to us; and one of these
 A turreted manorial Hall adorns;
 In which the good Man's Ancestors have dwelt
 From age to age, the Patrons of this Cure.
 To them, and to his decorating hand,

1814.

. This deep vale
 Winds far in reaches hidden from our eyes,

1827.

³ 1827.

., in course of common chance,

1814.

⁴ 1836.

This said, oft halting,

1814.

Nor reached the village churchyard * till the sun
 Travelling at steadier pace than ours, had risen
 Above the summits of the highest hills,
 And round our path darted oppressive beams.

As chanced, the portals of the sacred Pile
 Stood open; and we entered. On my frame,
 At such transition from the fervid air,
 A grateful coolness fell, that seemed to strike
 The heart, in concert with that temperate awe
 And natural reverence which the place inspired†
 Not raised in¹ nice proportions was the pile;
 But large and massy; for duration built;
 With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
 By naked rafters intricately crossed,
 Like leafless underboughs, in some thick wood,²
 All withered by the depth of shade above.
 Admonitory texts inscribed the walls,
 Each, in its ornamental scroll, enclosed;
 Each also crowned with wingèd heads—a pair
 Of rudely-painted Cherubim. The floor
 Of nave and aisle, in unpretending guise,
 Was occupied by oaken benches ranged
 In seemly rows; the chancel only showed
 Some vain distinctions, marks of earthly state
 By immemorial privilege allowed;
 Though with the Encincture's special sanctity
 But ill according. An heraldic shield,

¹ 1827.

Not framed to 1814.

² 1849.

. . . . , in some thick grove, 1814.
 , 'mid some thick grove, 1827.

* Grasmere.—Ed.

† Compare Charles Lamb's remarks; Note H. in the Appendix to this volume.—Ed.

Varying its tincture with the changeful light,
 Imbued the altar-window ; fixed aloft
 A faded hatchment hung, and one by time
 Yet undiscoloured.¹ A capacious pew
 Of sculptured oak stood here, with drapery lined ;
 And marble monuments were here displayed
 Thronging the walls ;² and on the floor beneath
 Sepulchral stones appeared, with emblems graven
 And foot-worn epitaphs, and some with small
 And shining effigies of brass inlaid.*

¹ 1849.

. ; the chancel only shewed
 Some inoffensive marks of earthly state
 And vain distinction. 1814.

The Chancel only shewed
 So privileged of yore, without offence
 To piety, some marks of earthly state
 And vain distinction,
 Allowed by ancient privilege ; though in sooth
 With the pure sanctity the place should breathe
 But ill according. A capacious pew
 Of sculptured oak stood here, with drapery lined
 And curtained closely round. Obnoxious less
 To blame or unavoidable regret,
 A high fixed hatchment, time-discoloured, told
 Of man's mortality and its own decay. C.

.
 Some vain distinctions, an heraldic shield,
 In tincture varying as the sun might shine,
 Imbued its eastern window, and aloft
 A faded hatchment hung, and one by time
 Yet undiscoloured, marks of earthly state. C.

² 1827.

Upon the walls ; 1814.

* The details of this description apply in most particulars to the Church at Grasmere, although some are probably borrowed from Wordsworth's recollections of Hawkshead and of Bowness. The "naked rafters intricately crossed," the "admonitory texts" inscribed on the walls,

"Each in its ornamental scroll enclosed,"

the "oaken benches," the "heraldic shield" in the "altar window," the "faded hatchment," the "marble monuments" and "sepulchral stones"

The tribute by these various records claimed,
 Duly we paid, each after each, and read¹
 The ordinary chronicle of birth,
 Office, alliance, and promotion—all.
 Ending in dust; of upright magistrates,
 Grave doctors strenuous for the mother-church,
 And uncorrupted senators, alike
 To king and people true. A brazen plate,
 Not easily deciphered, told of one
 Whose course of earthly honour was begun
 In quality of page among the train
 Of the eighth Henry, when he crossed the seas
 His royal state to show, and prove his strength
 In tournament, upon the fields of France.
 Another tablet registered the death,
 And praised the gallant bearing, of a Knight
 Tried in the sea-fights of the second Charles.
 Near this brave Knight his father lay entombed;
 And, to the silent language giving voice,
 I read,—how in his manhood's earlier day
 He, 'mid the afflictions of intestine war,
 And rightful government subverted, found
 One only solace—that he had espoused
 A virtuous Lady tenderly beloved
 For her benign perfections; and yet more

¹ 1849.

Without reluctance did we pay; and read

1814.

We paid to each with due respect,

C.

with "emblems graven and foot-worn epitaphs,"—all are there. Grasmere Church was "for duration built," as Wordsworth puts it; and, however ill adapted to the wants of modern ceremonial, it is to be hoped that all that is most characteristic of the old edifice will be preserved; and that—while no building can retain its original form for ever—its renovation will not destroy what remains of that "rude and antique majesty," which Wordsworth tells us had, even in 1843, been partially impaired.—ED.

That had beguiled the work from which he came,
 With spade and mattock o'er his shoulder hung ;
 To be deposited, for future need,
 In their appointed place. The pale Recluse
 Withdrew ; and straight we followed,—to a spot
 Where sun and shade were intermixed ; for there
 A broad oak, stretching forth its leafy arms
 From an adjoining pasture, overhung
 Small space of that green churchyard with a light
 And pleasant awning.* On the moss-grown wall
 My ancient Friend and I together took
 Our seats ; and thus the Solitary spake,
 Standing before us :—

“ Did you note the mien
 Of that self-solaced, easy-hearted churl,
 Death's hireling, who scoops out his neighbour's grave,
 Or wraps an old acquaintance up in clay,
 All unconcerned as he would bind a sheaf,
 Or plant a tree.† And did you hear his voice ? ¹
 I was abruptly summoned by the sound ²
 From some affecting images and thoughts,
 Which then were silent ; but crave utterance now.³

¹ 1836.

As unconcerned as when he plants a tree ?

1814.

² 1836.

. by his voice

1814.

³ 1849.

And from the company of serious words.

1814.

And from the company of serious words,

Which then were silent ; but crave utterance now. 1836.

* An oak now grows in the field a little to the east of the churchyard wall, which cannot, however, be that to which Wordsworth refers. Possibly an oak grew at that time beside the wall above the Rothay. The wall is still “moss-grown.”—Ed.

† See the footnote on the previous page.—Ed.

Much," he continued, with dejected look,¹
 "Much, yesterday, was said in glowing phrase²
 Of our sublime dependencies, and hopes
 For future states of being; and the wings
 Of speculation, joyfully outspread,
 Hovered above our destiny on earth:
 But stoop, and place the prospect of the soul
 In sober contrast with reality,
 And man's substantial life. If this mute earth
 Of what it holds could speak, and every grave
 Were as a volume, shut, yet capable
 Of yielding its contents to eye and ear,
 We should recoil, stricken with sorrow and shame,
 To see disclosed, by such dread proof, how ill
 That which is done accords with what is known
 To reason, and by conscience is enjoined;
 How idly, how perversely, life's whole course,
 To this conclusion, deviates from the line,
 Or of the end stops short, proposed to all
 At her aspiring outset.³

Mark the babe

Not long accustomed to this breathing world;
 One that hath barely learned to shape a smile,
 Though yet irrational of soul, to grasp
 With tiny finger⁴—to let fall a tear;
 And, as the heavy cloud of sleep dissolves,

¹ 1814.

with dejected look, 1836.

The text of 1849 returns to that of 1814.

² 1836.

Much, yesterday, was said in glowing phrase 1814.

³ 1827.

At its aspiring outset. . . . 1814.

⁴ 1836.

With tiny fingers, 1814.

To stretch his limbs, bemocking, as might seem,
 The outward functions of intelligent man ;
 A grave proficient in amusive feats
 Of puppetry, that from the lap declare
 His expectations, and announce his claims
 To that inheritance which millions rue
 That they were ever born to ! In due time
 A day of solemn ceremonial comes ;
 When they, who for this Minor hold in trust
 Rights that transcend the loftiest heritage¹
 Of mere humanity, present their Charge,
 For this occasion daintily adorned,
 At the baptismal font. And when the pure
 And consecrating element hath cleansed
 The original stain, the child is there received
 Into the second ark, Christ's church, with trust
 That he, from wrath redeemed, therein shall float
 Over the billows of this troublesome world
 To the fair land of everlasting life.
 Corrupt affections, covetous desires,
 Are all renounced ; high as the thought of man
 Can carry virtue, virtue is professed ;
 A dedication made, a promise given
 For due provision to control and guide,
 And unremitting progress to ensure
 In holiness and truth."

"You cannot blame,"

Here interposing fervently I said,
 "Rites which attest that Man by nature lies
 Bedded for good and evil in a gulf
 Fearfully low ; nor will your judgment scorn

¹ 1849.

. . . . the unblest heritage

1814.

. . . . the humblest heritage

1827.

Those services, whereby attempt is made
 To lift the creature toward that eminence¹
 On which, now fallen, erewhile in majesty
 He stood; or if not so, whose top serene
 At least he feels 'tis given him to descry;
 Not without aspirations, evermore
 Returning, and injunctions from within
 Doubt to cast off and weariness; in trust
 That what the Soul perceives, if glory lost,
 May be, through pains and persevering hope,
 Recovered; or, if hitherto unknown,
 Lies within reach, and one day shall be gained."

"I blame them not," he calmly answered—"no;
 The outward ritual and established forms
 With which communities of men invest
 These inward feelings, and the aspiring vows
 To which the lips give public utterance
 Are both a natural process; and by me
 Shall pass uncensured; though the issue prove,
 Bringing from age to age its own reproach,
 Incongruous, impotent, and blank.—But, oh!
 If to be weak is to be wretched—miserable,*
 As the lost Angel by a human voice
 Hath mournfully pronounced; then, in my mind,
 Far better not to move at all than move
 By impulse sent from such illusive power,—
 That finds and cannot fasten down; that grasps
 And is rejoiced, and loses while it grasps;

¹ 1327.

tow'rds that eminence

1814.

* Compare—

"To be weak is miserable, doing or suffering."

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I. l. 157.—ED.

That tempts, emboldens—for a time sustains,¹
 And then betrays; accuses and inflicts
 Remorseless punishment; and so retreads
 The inevitable circle; better far
 Than this, to graze the herb in thoughtless peace,
 By foresight or remembrance, undisturbed!

Philosophy! and thou more vaunted name
 Religion! with thy statelier retinue,
 Faith, Hope, and Charity—from the visible world.
 Choose for your emblems whatsoe'er ye find
 Of safest guidance or of firmest trust—²
 The torch, the star, the anchor; nor except
 The cross itself, at whose unconscious feet
 The generations of mankind have knelt
 Ruefully seized, and shedding bitter tears,
 And through that conflict seeking rest—of you,
 High-titled Powers, am I constrained to ask,
 Here standing, with the unvoyageable sky
 In faint reflection of infinitude
 Stretched overhead, and at my pensive feet
 A subterraneous magazine of bones,
 In whose dark vaults my own shall soon be laid,
 Where are your triumphs? your dominion where?
 And in what age admitted and confirmed?
 —Not for a happy land do I enquire,
 Island or grove, that hides a blessed few
 Who, with obedience willing and sincere,
 To your serene authorities conform;
 But whom, I ask, of individual Souls,
 Have ye withdrawn from passion's crooked ways;

¹ 1836.

doth a while sustain

1814.

² 1849.

and of firmest trust.

1814.

Inspired, and thoroughly fortified ?—If the heart
Could be inspected to its inmost folds
By sight undazzled with the glare of praise,
Who shall be named—in the resplendent line
Of sages, martyrs, confessors—the man
Whom the best might of faith, wherever fixed,¹
For one day's little compass, has preserved
From painful and discreditable shocks
Of contradiction, from some vague desire
Culpably cherished, or corrupt relapse
To some unsanctioned fear ? ”

“ If this be so,
And Man,” said I, “ be in his noblest shape
Thus pitiably infirm ; then, he who made,
And who shall judge the creature, will forgive.
—Yet, in its general tenor, your complaint
Is all too true ; and surely not misplaced :
For, from this pregnant spot of ground, such thoughts
Rise to the notice of a serious mind
By natural exhalation. With the dead
In their repose, the living in their mirth,
Who can reflect, unmoved, upon the round
Of smooth and solemnized complacencies,
By which, on Christian lands, from age to age
Profession mocks performance ? Earth is sick,
And Heaven is weary, of the hollow words
Which States and Kingdoms utter when they talk
Of truth and justice. Turn to private life
And social neighbourhood ; look we to ourselves
A light of duty shines on every day
For all ; and yet how few are warmed or cheered !
How few who mingle with their fellow-men

¹ 1849.

Whom the best might of Conscience, Truth, and
Hope,

And still remain self-governed, and apart,
 Like this our honoured Friend; and thence acquire
 Right to expect his vigorous decline,
 That promises to the end a blest old age!"

"Yet," with a smile of triumph thus exclaimed
 The Solitary, "in the life of man,
 If to the poetry of common speech
 Faith may be given, we see as in a glass
 A true reflection of the circling year,
 With all its seasons. Grant that Spring is there,
 In spite of many a rough untoward blast,
 Hopeful and promising with buds and flowers;
 Yet where is glowing Summer's long rich day,
 That *ought* to follow faithfully expressed?
 And mellow Autumn, charged with bounteous fruit,
 Where is she imaged? in what favoured clime
 Her lavish pomp, and ripe magnificence?
 —Yet, while the better part is missed, the worse
 In man's autumnal season is set forth
 With a resemblance not to be denied,
 And that contents him; bowers that hear no more
 The voice of gladness, less and less supply
 Of outward sunshine and internal warmth;
 And, with this change, sharp air and falling leaves,
 Foretelling aged Winter's desolate sway.¹

How gay the habitations that bedeck²
 This fertile valley!* Not a house but seems

¹ 1849.

Foretelling total Winter, blank and cold, 1814.

Foretelling aged Winter's dreary sway. 1814.

Prelude to coming Winter's desolate sway. C.

² 1827.

. that adorn 1814.

* "To begin with the *COTTAGES*. They are scattered over the valleys, and

To give assurance of content within ;*
 Embosomed happiness, and placid love ;
 As if the sunshine of the day were met
 With answering brightness in the hearts of all
 Who walk this favoured ground. But chance-regards,
 And notice forced upon incurious ears ;
 These, if these only, acting in despite
 Of the encomiums by my Friend pronounced
 On humble life, forbid the judging mind
 To trust the smiling aspect of this fair
 And noiseless commonwealth. The simple race
 Of mountaineers (by nature's self removed
 From foul temptations, and by constant care

under the hill sides, and on the rocks ; and, even to this day, in the more retired dales, without any intrusion of more assuming buildings ;

Clustered like stars some few, but single most,
 And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
 Or glancing on each other cheerful looks,
 Like separated stars with clouds between.—M.S.

The dwelling-houses and contiguous out-houses are, in many instances, of the colour of the native rock out of which they have been built. . . . These humble dwellings remind the contemplative spectator of a production of Nature, and may (using a strong expression) rather be said to have grown, than to have been erected ; to have risen, by an instinct of their own, so little is there of formality, such is their wildness and beauty. Among the numerous recesses and projections in the walls and in the different stages of their roofs, are seen bold and harmonious effects of contrasted sunshine and shadow. . . . These dwellings, mostly built, as has been said, of rough unhewn stone, are roofed with rough and uneven slates ; so that both the coverings and sides of the houses have furnished places of rest for the seeds of mosses, lichens, ferns, and flowers. Hence buildings, which in their very form call to mind the processes of Nature, do thus, clothed in part with a vegetable garb, appear to be received into the bosom of the living principle of things, as it exists and acts amongst the woods and fields.”—Wordsworth's *Description of the Scenery of the Lakes*, Section 2.—Ed.

* Compare Gray's description of the Vale of Grasmere in his Journal :—
 “Not a single red tile, nor flaring gentleman's house, or garden-wall, breaks in upon the repose of this little unsuspected paradise ; but all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty, in its neatest and most becoming attire.”—Ed.

Of a good shepherd tended as themselves
 Do tend their flocks) partake man's general lot¹
 With little mitigation. They escape,
 Perchance, the heavier woes of guilt; feel not²
 The tedium of fantastic idleness:
 Yet life, as with the multitude, with them
 Is fashioned like an ill-constructed tale;
 That on the outset wastes its gay desires;
 Its fair adventures, its enlivening hopes;
 And pleasant interests—for the sequel leaving
 Old things repeated with diminished grace;
 And all the laboured novelties at best
 Imperfect substitutes, whose use and power
 Evince the want and weakness whence they spring.”

While in this serious mood we held discourse,
 The reverend Pastor toward³ the church-yard gate
 Approached; and, with a mild respectful air
 Of native cordiality, our Friend
 Advanced to greet him. With a gracious mien
 Was he received, and mutual joy prevailed.
 Awhile they stood in conference, and I guess
 That he, who now upon the mossy wall
 Sate by my side, had vanished, if a wish
 Could have transferred him to the flying clouds,
 Or the least penetrable hiding-place
 In his own valley's rocky guardianship.⁴

¹ 1827.

Do tend their flocks, these share Man's general lot 1814:

² 1836.

Perchance, guilt's heavier woes; and do not feel 1814.

³ 1827.

The reverend Pastor tow'rds . . . 1814.

⁴ 1836.

Could have transferred him to his lonely House
 Within the circuit of those guardian rocks. 1814.

—For me, I looked upon the pair, well pleased :
 Nature had framed them both, and both were marked
 By circumstance, with intermixture fine
 Of contrast and resemblance. To an oak
 Hardy and grand, a weather-beaten oak,
 Fresh in the strength and majesty of age;
 One might be likened : flourishing appeared,
 Though somewhat past the fulness of his prime,
 The other—like a stately sycamore,*
 That spreads, in gentle pomp, its honied shade.¹

A general greeting was exchanged ; and soon
 The Pastor learned that his approach had given
 A welcome interruption to discourse
 Grave, and in truth too often sad.²—“ Is Man
 A child of hope ? Do generations press
 On generations, without progress made ?
 Halts the individual, ere his hairs be grey;
 Perforce ? Are we a creature in whom good
 Preponderates, or evil ? Doth the will
 Acknowledge reason’s law ? A living power

¹ 1836.

That spreads, in gentler pomp, . . . 1814.

² 1827.

Grave, and in truth full often sad.— . . . 1814.

* “To illustrate the relation which in my mind this Pastor bore to the Wanderer, and the resemblances between them, or rather the points of community in their nature, I likened one to an oak, and the other to a sycamore; and having here referred to this comparison, I need only add, I had no one individual in my mind, wishing rather to embody this idea than to break in upon the simplicity of it by traits of individual character, or of any peculiarity of opinion.”—(I. F. MS.)

The sycamore is the favourite tree at the Mountain Farms of Cumberland and Westmoreland, as it affords the best shelter from rain, and the most thorough protection from the heat of the sun, during sheep-shearing. A special feature of the valley as you go down Langdale from Blea Tarn, is the abundance of sycamore; some of the farm-houses are literally *embowered* by it.—Ed.

Is virtue, or no better than a name,
Fleeting as health or beauty, and unsound ?
So that the only substance which remains,
(For thus the tenor of complaint hath run)
Among so many shadows, are the pains
And penalties of miserable life,
Doomed to decay, and then expire in dust !
—Our cogitations this way have been drawn,
These are the points," the Wanderer said, " on which
Our inquest turns.—Accord, good Sir ! the light
Of your experience to dispel this gloom :
By your persuasive wisdom shall the heart
That frets, or languishes, be stilled and cheered."

" Our nature," said the Priest, in mild reply,
" Angels may weigh and fathom : they perceive,
With undistempered and unclouded spirit,
The object as it is ; but, for ourselves,
That speculative height *we* may not reach.
The good and evil are our own ; and we
Are that which we would contemplate from far.
Knowledge, for us, is difficult to gain—
Is difficult to gain, and hard to keep—
As virtue's self ; like virtue is beset
With snares ; tried, tempted, subject to decay.
Love, admiration, fear, desire, and hate,
Blind were we without these : through these alone
Are capable to notice or discern
Or to record ; we judge, but cannot be
Indifferent judges. 'Spite of proudest boast,
Reason, best reason, is to imperfect man
An effort only, and a noble aim ;
A crown, an attribute of sovereign power,
Still to be courted—never to be won.

—Look forth, or each man dive into himself;
 What sees he but a creature too perturbed;
 That is transported to excess; that yearns,
 Regrets, or trembles, wrongly, or too much;
 Hopes rashly, in disgust as rash recoils;
 Battens on spleen, or moulders in despair?
 Thus comprehension fails, and truth is missed;
 Thus darkness¹ and delusion round our path
 Spread, from disease, whose subtle injury lurks
 Within the very faculty of sight.

Yet for the general purposes of faith
 In Providence, for solace and support,
 We may not doubt that who can best subject
 The will to reason's law, can strictliest live²
 And act in that obedience, he shall gain
 The clearest apprehension of those truths,
 Which unassisted reason's utmost power
 Is too infirm to reach. But, waiving this,
 And our regards confining within bounds,
 Of less exalted consciousness, through which
 The very multitude are free to range,
 We safely may affirm that human life
 Is either fair and tempting,³ a soft scene
 Grateful to sight, refreshing to the soul,
 Or a forbidden⁴ tract of cheerless view;
 Even as the same is looked at, or approached.
 Thus, when in changeful April fields are white

¹ 1836.

Thus truth is missed, and comprehension fails;
 And darkness

1814.

² 1836.

., and strictliest live

1814.

³ 1827.

. fair or tempting, .

1814.

⁴ 1820.

Or a forbidding

1814.

With new-fallen snow, if from the sullen north
 Your walk conduct you hither, ere the sun
 Hath gained his noontide height, this church-yard, filled
 With mounds¹ transversely lying side by side
 From east to west, before you will appear
 An unillumined, blank, and dreary plain,²
 With more than wintry cheerlessness and gloom
 Saddening the heart. Go forward, and look back;
 Look,³ from the quarter whence the lord of light,
 Of life, of love, and gladness doth dispense
 His beams; which, unexcluded in their fall,
 Upon the southern side of every grave
 Have gently exercised a melting power;
Then will a vernal prospect greet your eye,
 All fresh and beautiful, and green and bright,
 Hopeful and cheerful:—vanished is the pall

¹ 1836.

Permit me," said the Priest continuing, "here
 To use an illustration of my thought,
 Drawn from the very spot on which we stand,
 —In changeful April, when, as he is wont,
 Winter has reassumed a short lived sway
 And whitened all the surface of the fields,
 If from the sullen region of the north
 Towards the circuit of this holy ground
 Your walk conducts you, ere the vigorous sun,
 High climbing, hath attained his noon-tide height—
 These Mounds, 1814.

Thus, when in changeful April snow has fallen,
 And fields are white, if from the sullen north
 Your walk conduct you hither, ere the sun
 Hath gained his noontide height, this churchyard, filled
 With mounds 1827.

² 1827.

A dreary plain of unillumined snow. 1814.

³ 1827.

. Go forward, and look back;
 On the same circuit of this churchyard ground
 Look, 1814.

That overspread and chilled the sacred turf,
 Vanished or hidden;¹ and the whole domain,
 To some, too lightly minded, might appear
 A meadow carpet for the dancing hours.*
 —This contrast, not unsuitable to life,
 Is to that other state more apposite,
 Death and its two-fold aspect! wintry—one,
 Cold, sullen, blank, from hope and joy shut out;
 The other, which the ray divine hath touched,
 Replete with vivid promise, bright as spring."

"We see, then, as we feel," the Wanderer thus
 With a complacent animation spake,
 "And in your judgment, Sir! the mind's repose
 On evidence is not to be ensured
 By act of naked reason. Moral truth
 Is no mechanic structure, built by rule;
 And which, once built, retains a stedfast shape
 And undisturbed proportions; but a thing
 Subject, you deem, to vital accidents;
 And, like the water-lily, lives and thrives,
 Whose root is fixed in stable earth, whose head
 Floats on the tossing waves. With joy sincere
 I re-salute these sentiments confirmed
 By your authority. But how acquire
 The inward principle that gives effect
 To outward argument; the passive will
 Meek to admit; the active energy,
 Strong and unbounded to embrace, and firm
 To keep and cherish? how shall man unite

¹ 1836.

Hopeful and cheerful; vanished is the snow,
 Vanished or hidden;

1814.

* The group of meditative talkers are supposed to be seated on the moss-grown wall to the east of the Churchyard, facing Silver How.—Ed.

With¹ self-forgetting tenderness of heart
 An earth-despising² dignity of soul ?
 Wise in that union, and without it blind!"

"The way," said I, "to court, if not obtain
 The ingenuous mind, apt to be set aright ;
 This, in the lonely dell discoursing, you
 Declared at large ; and by what exercise
 From visible nature, or the inner self
 Power may be trained, and renovation brought
 To those who need the gift. But, after all,
 Is aught so certain as that man is doomed
 To breathe beneath a vault of ignorance ?
 The natural roof of that dark house in which
 His soul is pent ! How little can be known—
 This is the wise man's sigh ; how far we err—
 This is the good man's not unfrequent pang !
 And they perhaps err least, the lowly class
 Whom a benign necessity compels
 To follow reason's least ambitious course ;
 Such do I mean who, unperplexed by doubt,
 And unincited by a wish to look
 Into high objects farther than they may,
 Pace to and fro, from morn till even-tide,
 The narrow avenue of daily toil
 For daily bread."

"Yes," buoyantly exclaimed
 The pale Recluse—"praise to the sturdy plough,
 And patient spade ; praise to the simple crook,"³

¹ 1827.

A 1814.

² 1827.

And earth-despising 1814.

³ 1836.

. . . , and shepherd's simple crook, 1814.

And ponderous loom—resounding while it holds
Body and mind in one captivity ;
And let the light mechanic tool be hailed
With honour ; which, encasing by the power
Of long companionship, the artist's hand,
Cuts off that hand, with all its world of nerves,
From a too busy commerce with the heart !
—Inglorious implements of craft and toil,
Both ye that shape and build, and ye that force,
By slow solicitation, earth to yield
Her annual bounty, sparingly dealt forth
With wise reluctance ; you would I extol,
Not for gross good alone which ye produce,
But for the impertinent and ceaseless strife
Of proofs and reasons ye preclude—in those
Who to your dull society are born,
And with their humble birthright rest content.
—Would I had ne'er renounced it !”

A slight flush

Of moral anger previously had tinged
The old Man's cheek ; but, at this closing turn
Of self-reproach, it passed away. Said he,
“That which we feel we utter ; as we think
So have we argued ; reaping for our pains
No visible recompense. For our relief
You,” to the Pastor turning thus he spake,
“Have kindly interposed. May I entreat
Your further help ? The mine of real life
Dig for us ; and present us, in the shape
Of virgin ore, that gold which we, by pains
Fruitless as those of æry alchemists,
Seek from the torturing crucible. There lies
Around us a domain where you have long

Watched both the outward course and inner heart :¹
 Give us, for our abstractions, solid facts ;
 For our disputes, plain pictures. Say what man
 He is who cultivates yon hanging field ;
 What qualities of mind she bears, who comes,
 For morn and evening service, with her pail,
 To that green pasture ;* place before our sight
 The family who dwell within yon house
 Fenced round with glittering laurel ;† or in that
 Below, from which the curling smoke ascends.
 Or rather, as we stand on holy earth,
 And have the dead around us,‡ take from them
 Your instances ; for they are both best known,
 And by frail man most equitably judged.
 Epitomise the life ; pronounce, you can,
 Authentic epitaphs on some of these
 Who, from their lowly mansions hither brought,
 Beneath this turf lie mouldering at our feet :
 So, by your records, may our doubts be solved ;
 And so, not searching higher, we may learn
To prize the breath we share with human kind ;
And look upon the dust of man with awe."

The Priest replied—" An office you impose
 For which peculiar requisites are mine ;
 Yet much, I feel, is wanting—else the task
 Would be most grateful. True indeed it is
 That they whom death has hidden from our sight

¹ 1827.

. Where you have long
 Held spiritual sway, have guided and consoled,
 And watched the outward course and inner heart. 1814.

* Possibly at Dale End, Grasmere.—Ed.

† Probably the Wyke, Sarah Mackereth's Cottage.—Ed.

‡ See Wordsworth's own note, p. 399.

Are worthiest of the mind's regard ; with these
 The future cannot contradict the past :
 Mortality's last exercise and proof
 Is undergone ; the transit made that shows
 The very Soul, revealed as she departs.¹
 Yet, on your first suggestion, will I give,
 Ere we descend into these silent vaults,
 One picture from the living.

You behold,

High on the breast of yon dark mountain, dark
 With stony barrenness,* a shining speck
 Bright as a sunbeam sleeping till a shower
 Brush it away, or cloud pass over it ;
 And such it might be deemed—a sleeping sunbeam ;
 But 'tis a plot of cultivated ground,
 Cut off, an island in the dusky waste ;
 And that attractive brightness is its own.
 The lofty site, by nature framed to tempt

¹ 1827.

. . . . , revealed as it departs.

1814.

* Silver How is the only "dark mountain" visible to the west from the moss-grown seat in the Grasmere Churchyard ; but here again the realism of the narrative gives way, and not Silver How but Lingmoor is described, with Hackett Cottage at its south-eastern foot. The Fenwick note is here explicit. "First for the one picture given by the 'Wanderer' of the living. In this nothing is introduced but what was taken from Nature, and real life. The cottage was called Hackett, and stands, as described, on the southern extremity of the ridge which separates the two Langdales. The pair who inhabited it were called Jonathan and Betty Yewdale." Later on, in Book VI., p. 257, Wordsworth describes the blue roofs of Hawkshead village as ornamenting

"A distant reach
Of this far winding vale."

Unless, therefore, he is speaking in the vague, Hackett and not Grasmere is the place described. The Fenwick note to the *Epistle to Sir George Beaumont*, however, decides the question (see Vol. IV. p. 249). "The house (Hackett) and its inmates are referred to in the fifth book of *The Excursion*, in the passage beginning—

"You behold,
 High on the breast of yon dark mountain, dark." —ED.

Amid a wilderness of rocks and stones
 The tiller's hand, a hermit might have chosen,
 For opportunity presented, thence
 Far forth to send his wandering eye o'er land
 And ocean, and look down upon the works,
 The habitations, and the ways of men,
 Himself unseen ! But no tradition tells
 That ever hermit dipped his maple dish
 In the sweet spring that lurks 'mid yon green fields ;
 And no such visionary views belong
 To those who occupy and till the ground,
 High on that mountain where they long have dwelt¹
 A wedded pair in childless solitude.
 A house of stones, collected on the spot,
 By rude hands built, with rocky knolls in front,
 Backed also by a ledge of rock, whose crest
 Of birch-trees waves over the chimney top ;
 A rough abode—in colour, shape, and size,²
 Such as in unsafe times of border-war
 Might have been wished for and contrived, to elude
 The eye of roving plunderer—for their need
 Suffices ; and unshaken bears the assault
 Of their most dreaded foe, the strong South-west
 In anger blowing from the distant sea.
 —Alone within her solitary hut ;
 There, or within the compass of her fields,
 At any moment may the Dame be found,
 True as the stock-dove to her shallow nest

¹ 1849.

And on the bosom of the mountain dwell—

1814.

² 1836.

. above the chimney top ;

In shape, in size, and colour, an abode

1814.

. above the chimney top ;

A rough abode—in colour, shape, and size,

1827.

And to the grove that holds it. She beguiles
 By intermingled work of house and field
 The summer's day, and winter's ; with success
 Not equal, but sufficient to maintain,
 Even at the worst, a smooth stream of content,
 Until the expected hour at which her Mate
 From the far-distant quarry's vault returns ;
 And by his converse crowns a silent day
 With evening cheerfulness. In powers of mind,
 In scale of culture, few among my flock¹
 Hold lower rank than this sequestered pair :
 But true humility descends from heaven ;²
 And that best gift of heaven hath fallen on them ;
 Abundant recompense for every want.
 —Stoop from your height, ye proud, and copy these !
 Who, in their noiseless dwelling-place, can hear
 The voice of wisdom whispering scripture texts
 For the mind's government, or temper's peace ;
 And recommending for their mutual need,
 Forgiveness, patience, hope, and charity !”

“ Much was I pleased,” the grey-haired Wanderer said,
 “ When to those shining fields our notice first
 You turned ; and yet more pleased have from your lips
 Gathered this fair report of them who dwell³
 In that retirement ; whither, by such course
 Of evil hap and good as oft awaits
 A tired way-faring man, once *I* was brought
 While traversing alone yon mountain pass.

¹ 1814-1840.

Few only in the scale of culture, hold
 Among my flock

C.

² 1849.

But humbleness of heart descends from heaven ; 1814.

³ 1827.

. . . . of those who dwell 1814.

Dark on my road the autumnal evening fell,¹
 And night succeeded with unusual gloom,²
 So hazardous that feet and hands became³
 Guides better than mine eyes—until a light
 High in the gloom appeared, too high, methought,
 For human habitation ; but I longed
 To reach it, destitute of other hope.
 I looked with steadiness as sailors look
 On the north star, or watch-tower's distant lamp
 And saw the light—now fixed—and shifting now—*
 Not like a dancing meteor, but in line
 Of never-varying motion, to and fro.
 It is no night-fire of the naked hills,
 Thought I—⁴ some friendly covert must be near.
 With this persuasion thitherward my steps
 I turn, and reach at last the guiding light ;
 Joy to myself ! but to the heart of her
 Who there was standing on the open hill,
 (The same kind Matron whom your tongue hath praised)
 Alarm and disappointment ! The alarm

¹ 1846.

A lone way-faring Man, I once was brought.
 Dark on my road the autumnal evening fell
 While I was traversing yon mountain-pass,

1814.

² 1814-1849.

And with the night succeeded a thick gloom,

C.

³ 1849.

So that my feet and hands at length became

1814.

⁴ 1827.

Said I,

1814.

* Compare the sonnet, referring to Allan Bank, beginning—

“ Even as a dragon's eye that feels the stress
 Of a bedimmed sleep, or as a lamp
 Suddenly glaring through sepulchral damp,
 So burns yon Taper mid a black recess
 Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless,” &c.—ED.

Ceased, when she learned through what mishap I came,
 And by what help had gained those distant fields.
 Drawn from her cottage, on that aëry height,¹
 Bearing a lantern in her hand she stood,
 Or paced the ground—to guide her Husband home,
 By that unwearied signal, kened afar ;*
 An anxious duty ! which the lofty site,
 Traversed but by a few irregular paths,²
 Imposes, whensoever untoward chance
 Detains him after his accustomed hour
 Till night lies black upon the ground. ‘But come,
 Come,’ said the Matron, ‘to our poor abode ;
 Those dark rocks hide it !’³ Entering, I beheld
 A blazing fire—beside a cleanly hearth
 Sate down ; and to her office, with leave asked,
 The Dame returned.

Or ere that glowing pile⁴

¹ 1836.

. . . . , on that open height 1814.

² 1827.

. . . . which the lofty Site,
 Far from all public road or beaten way
 And traversed only by a few faint paths, 1814.

³ 1832.

(Such chance is rare) detains him till the night
 Falls black upon the hills. ‘But come,’ she said,
 ‘Come let me lead you to our poor Abode.
 Behind those rocks it stands, as if it shunned,
 In churlishness, the eye of all mankind ;
 But the few Guests who seek the door receive
 Most hearty welcome.’— . . . 1814.
 Detains him after his accustomed hour
 When night lies black upon the hills. ‘But come, 1827.

⁴ 1827.

. . . . —Before that glowing pile 1814.

* Compare the sonnet beginning—

“The fairest, brightest hues of ether fade”

and more especially the Fenwick note prefixed to that sonnet.--Ed.

Of mountain turf required the builder's hand
 Its wasted splendour to repair, the door
 Opened, and she re-entered with glad looks,
 Her Helpmate following. Hospitable fare,
 Frank conversation, made the evening's treat :
 Need a bewildered traveller wish for more ?
 But more was given ; I studied, as we sate
 By the bright fire, the good Man's form, and face
 Not less than beautiful ;¹ an open brow
 Of undisturbed humanity ; a cheek
 Suffused with something of a feminine hue ;*
 Eyes beaming courtesy and mild regard ;
 But, in the quicker turns of the discourse,
 Expression slowly varying, that evinced
 A tardy apprehension. From a fount
 Lost, thought I, in the obscurities of time,
 But honoured once, those features and that mien²
 May have descended, though I see them here.
 In such a man, so gentle and subdued,
 Withal so graceful in his gentleness,
 A race illustrious for heroic deeds,
 Humbled, but not degraded, may expire.
 This pleasing fancy (cherished and upheld
 By sundry recollections of such fall
 From high to low, ascent from low to high,

¹ 1849.

But more was given ; the eye, the mind, the heart,
 Found exercise in nothing, as we sate
 By the bright fire, the good Man's face—composed
 Of features elegant ;

1814.

But more was given ; I studied as we sate

1827.

² 1836.

. these features and that mien

1814.

* This feminine complexion of the Cumbrian peasants who work in the higher mines, is probably in part due to the continual mists and moisture of the heights. It has been observed especially amongst the workers in the high slate quarries at Walna Scar.—ED.

As books record, and even the careless mind
 Cannot but notice among men and things)
 Went with me to the place of my repose.¹

Roused by the crowing cock at dawn of day,
 I yet had risen too late to interchange
 A morning salutation with my Host,
 Gone forth already to the far-off seat
 Of his day's work. 'Three dark mid-winter months
 'Pass,' said the Matron, 'and I never see,
 'Save when the sabbath brings its kind release,
 'My Helpmate's face by light of day. He quits
 'His door in darkness, nor till dusk returns.
 'And, through Heaven's blessing,² thus we gain the bread
 'For which we pray; and for the wants provide
 'Of sickness, accident, and helpless age.
 'Companions have I many; many friends,
 'Dependants, comforters—my wheel, my fire,
 'All day the house-clock ticking in mine ear,
 'The cackling hen, the tender chicken brood,
 'And the wild birds that gather round my porch.
 'This honest sheep-dog's countenance I read;
 'With him can talk; nor blush to waste a word³
 'On creatures less intelligent and shrewd.
 'And if the blustering wind that drives the clouds
 'Care not for me, he lingers round my door,
 'And makes me pastime when our tempers suit;—
 'But, above all, my thoughts are my support,

¹ 1814-1849.

Sweetened for me our mutual good night
 Nor left me on a lonely pillow stretched
 Till slumber had given way to dreamless sleep.

C.

² 1814-1849.

And, through God's blessing,

C.

³ 1827.

. . . ; nor seldom waste a word

1814.

' My comfort :—would that they were oftener fixed
 ' On what, for guidance in the way that leads
 ' To heaven, I know, by my Redeemer taught.'
 The Matron ended¹—nor could I forbear
 To exclaim—' O happy ! yielding to the law
 Of these privations, richer in the main !—
 While thankless thousands are oppress'd and clogg'd²
 By ease and leisure ; by the very wealth
 And pride of opportunity made poor ;
 While tens of thousands falter in their path,
 And sink, through utter want of cheering light ;
 For you the hours of labour do not flag ;
 For you each evening hath its shining star,
 And every sabbath-day its golden sun."

" Yes ! " said the Solitary, with a smile
 That seemed to break from an expanding heart,
 " The untutored bird may found, and so construct,
 And with such soft materials line, her nest,
 Fixed in the centre of a prickly brake,
 That the thorns wound her not ; they only guard.
 Powers not unjustly likened to those gifts
 Of happy instinct which the woodland bird
 Shares with her species, nature's grace sometimes
 Upon the individual doth confer,
 Among her³ higher creatures born and trained
 To use of reason. And, I own that, tired
 Of the ostentatious world—a swelling stage
 With empty actions, and vain passions stuffed,

¹ 1849.

" —But, above all, my Thoughts are my support."
 The Matron ended—

1814.

² 1832.

. are oppress'd and clogg'd

1814.

³ 1827.

Among the higher

1814.

And from the private struggles of mankind
 Hoping far less¹ than I could wish to hope,
 Far less than once I trusted and believed—
 I love to hear of those, who, not contending
 Nor summoned to contend for virtue's prize,
 Miss not the humbler good at which they aim,
 Blest with a kindly faculty to blunt
 The edge of adverse circumstance, and turn
 Into their contraries the petty plagues
 And hindrances with which they stand beset.
 In early youth, among my native hills,
 I knew a Scottish Peasant who possessed
 A few small crofts of stone-encumbered ground;
 Masses of every shape and size, that lay
 Scattered about under the mouldering walls²
 Of a rough precipice; and some, apart,
 In quarters unobnoxious to such chance,
 As if the moon had showered them down in spite.
 But he repined not. Though the plough was scared
 By these obstructions, 'round the shady stones
 A fertilising moisture,' said the Swain,
 'Gathers, and is preserved; and feeding dews
 And damps, through all the droughty summer day
 From out their substance issuing, maintain
 Herbage that never fails: no grass springs up
 So green, so fresh, so plentiful, as mine!'
 But³ thinly sown these natures; rare, at least,

¹ 1836.

Hoping for less 1814.

² 1832.

. beneath the mouldering walls 1814.

³ 1827.

. so plentiful, as mine!'

See, in this well conditioned Soul, a Third
 To match with your good Couple that put forth
 Their homely graces on the mountain side.

But 1814.

The mutual aptitude of seed and soil
 That yields such kindly product. He, whose bed
 Perhaps yon loose sods cover, the poor Pensioner
 Brought yesterday from our sequestered dell
 Here to lie down in lasting quiet, he,
 If living now, could otherwise report
 Of rustic loneliness: that grey-haired Orphan—
 So call him, for humanity to him
 No parent was—feelingly could have told,¹
 In life, in death, what solitude can breed
 Of selfishness, and cruelty, and vice;
 Or, if it breed not, hath not power to cure.
 —But your compliance, Sir! with our request
 My words too long have hindered.”

Undeterred,

Perhaps incited rather, by these shocks,
 In no ungracious opposition, given
 To the confiding spirit of his own
 Experienced faith, the reverend Pastor said,
 Around him looking; “Where shall I begin?
 Who shall be first selected from my flock
 Gathered together in their peaceful fold?”
 He paused—and having lifted up his eyes
 To the pure heaven, he cast them down again
 Upon the earth beneath his feet; and spake:—

“To a mysteriously-united pair²

This place is consecrate; to Death and Life,
 And to the best affections that proceed
 From their conjunction; consecrate to faith
 In him who bled for man upon the cross;

¹ 1832

. could feelingly have told,

1814.

² 1849

“To a mysteriously-consorted Pair,

1814.

Hallowed to revelation ; and no less¹
 To reason's mandates ; and the hopes divine
 Of pure imagination ;—above all,
 To charity, and love, that have provided,
 Within these precincts, a capacious bed
 And receptacle, open to the good
 And evil, to the just and the unjust ;
 In which they find an equal resting-place :
 Even as the multitude of kindred brooks
 And streams, whose murmur fills this hollow vale,
 Whether their course be turbulent or smooth,
 Their waters clear or sullied, all are lost
 Within the bosom of yon crystal Lake,
 And end their journey in the same repose !

And blest are they who sleep ; and we that know,
 While in a spot like this we breathe and walk,
 That all beneath us by the wings are covered
 Of motherly humanity, outspread
 And gathering all within their tender shade,
 Though loth and slow to come ! A battle-field,
 In stillness left when slaughter is no more,
 With this compared, makes a strange spectacle !²
 A dismal prospect yields the wild shore strewn
 With wrecks, and trod by feet of young and old
 Wandering about in miserable search
 Of friends or kindred,³ whom the angry sea

¹ 1814-1849.

Hallowed to revelation ; and therewith C.

² 1849.

. . . . , is a strange spectacle ! 1814

. . . . , yields a strange spectacle ! 1836.

³ 1836.

A rueful sight the wild shore strewn with wrecks
 And trod by people in afflicted quest,
 Of friends and kindred, 1814.

Restores not to their prayer ! Ah ! who would think
 That all the scattered subjects which compose
 Earth's melancholy vision through the space
 Of all her climes—these wretched, these depraved,
 To virtue lost, insensible of peace,
 From the delights of charity cut off,
 To pity dead, the oppressor and the opprest ;¹
 Tyrants who utter the destroying word,
 And slaves who will consent to be destroyed—
 Were of one species with the sheltered few,
 Who, with a dutiful and tender hand,
 Lodged, in a dear appropriated spot,²
 This file of infants ; some that never breathed
 The vital air ; others, which, though allowed³
 That privilege, did yet expire too soon,
 Or with too brief a warning, to admit
 Administration of the holy rite
 That lovingly consigns the babe to the arms
 Of Jesus, and his everlasting care.
 These that in trembling hope are laid apart ;
 And the besprinkled nursling, unrequired
 Till he begins to smile upon the breast
 That feeds him ; and the tottering little-one
 Taken from air and sunshine when the rose
 Of infancy first blooms upon his cheek ;
 The thinking, thoughtless, school-boy ; the bold youth
 Of soul impetuous, and the bashful maid
 Smitten while all the promises of life
 Are opening round her ; those of middle age,

¹ 1827.

. and the oppressed ; 1814.

² 1836.

Did lodge, in an appropriated spot, 1814.

³ 1836.

. ; and others, who allowed. 1814.

Cast down while confident in strength they stand,
 Like pillars fixed more firmly, as might seem,
 And more secure, by very weight of all
 That, for support, rests on them; the decayed
 And burthensome; and lastly, that poor few
 Whose light of reason is with age extinct;
 The hopeful and the hopeless, first and last,
 The earliest summoned and the longest spared—
 Are here deposited, with tribute paid
 Various, but unto each some tribute paid;¹
 As if, amid these peaceful hills and groves,
 Society were touched with kind concern,
 And gentle 'Nature grieved, that one should die;'
 Or, if the change demanded no regret,
 Observed the liberating stroke—and blessed.

And whence that tribute? wherefore these regards? †
 Not from the naked *Heart* alone of Man
 (Though claiming high distinction upon earth²
 As the sole spring and fountain-head of tears,
 His own peculiar utterance for distress
 Or gladness)—No," the philosophic Priest
 Continued, "'tis not in the vital seat
 Of feeling to produce them, without aid
 From the pure soul, the soul sublime and pure;
 With her two faculties of eye and ear,
 The one by which a creature, whom his sins

¹ 1814-1849.

Are here deposited as the like shall be
 Through ages yet to come.

C.

² 1827.

(Though framed to high distinction upon earth, 1814.

* See Wordsworth's note, p. 399.—ED.

† See Wordsworth's note, p. 400.—ED.

Have rendered prone, can upward look to heaven ;¹
 The other that empowers him to perceive
 The voice of Deity, on height and plain,
 Whispering those truths in stillness, which the WORD,
 To the four quarters of the winds, proclaims.
 Not without such assistance could the use
 Of these benign observances prevail :
 Thus are they born, thus fostered, thus maintained ;²
 And by the care prospective of our wise
 Forefathers, who, to guard against the shocks
 The fluctuation and decay of things,
 Embodied and established these high truths
 In solemn institutions :—men convinced
 That life is love and immortality,
 The being one, and one the element.
 There lies the channel, and original bed,
 From the beginning, hollowed out and scooped
 For Man's affections—else betrayed and lost,
 And swallowed up 'mid deserts infinite !
 This is the genuine course, the aim, and end
 Of prescient reason ; all conclusions else
 Are abject, vain, presumptuous, and perverse.
 The faith partaking of those holy times,
 Life, I repeat, is energy of love
 Divine or human ; exercised in pain,
 In strife, and tribulation ; and ordained,
 If so approved and sanctified, to pass,
 Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy."

¹ 1814-1849.

upward can look to heaven. C.

² 1836.

, and maintained ; 1814.

Book Sixth.

THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

ARGUMENT.

Poet's Address to the State and Church of England—The Pastor not inferior to the ancient Worthies of the Church—He begins his Narratives with an instance of unrequited Love—Anguish of mind subdued and how—The lonely Miner—An instance of perseverance—Which leads by contrast to an example of abused talents, irresolution, and weakness—Solitary, applying this covertly to his own case, asks for an instance of some Stranger, whose dispositions may have led him to end his days here—Pastor, in answer, gives an account of the harmonising influence of Solitude upon two men of opposite principles, who had encountered agitations in public life—The rule by which Peace may be obtained, expressed and where—Solitary hints at an overpowering Fatality—Answer of the Pastor—What subjects he will exclude from his Narratives—Conversation upon this—Instance of an unamiable character, a Female, and why given—Contrasted with this, a meek sufferer, from unguarded and betrayed love—Instance of heavier guilt, and its consequences to the Offender—With this instance of a Marriage Contract broken is contrasted one of a widower, evidencing his faithful affection towards his deceased wife by his care of their female children.¹

¹ 1827.

Second Marriage of a Widower prudential and happy. 1814

HAIL to the crown by Freedom shaped—to gird
 An English Sovereign's brow ! and to the throne
 Whereon he sits ! Whose deep foundations lie
 In veneration and the people's love ;
 Whose steps are equity, whose seat is law.
 —Hail to the State of England ! And conjoin
 With this a salutation as devout,
 Made to the spiritual fabric of her Church ;
 Founded in truth ; by blood of martyrdom
 Cemented ; by the hands of Wisdom reared
 In beauty of holiness, with ordered pomp,
 Decent and unproved. The voice, that greets
 The majesty of both, shall pray for both ;

That, mutually protected and sustained,*
 They may endure long as the sea surrounds¹
 This favoured Land, or sunshine warms her soil.

And O, ye swelling hills, and spacious plains !
 Besprent from shore to shore with steeple-towers,
 And spires whose ' silent finger points to heaven ; ' †
 Nor wanting, at wide intervals, the bulk
 Of ancient minster lifted above the cloud
 Of the dense air, which town or city breeds
 To intercept the sun's glad beams—may ne'er
 That true succession fail of English hearts,
 Who, with ancestral feeling, can perceive²
 What in those holy structures ye possess
 Of ornamental interest, and the charm
 Of pious sentiment diffused afar,
 And human charity, and social love.
 —Thus never shall the indignities of time
 Approach their reverend graces, unopposed ;
 Nor shall the elements be free to hurt
 Their fair proportions ; nor the blinder rage
 Of bigot zeal madly to overturn ;
 And, if the desolating hand of war
 Spare them, they shall continue to bestow,
 Upon the thronged abodes of busy men

¹ 1832.

. as long as sea surrounds, 1814.

² 1827.. of English hearts,
 That can perceive, not less than heretofore
 Our ancestors did feelingly perceive, 1814.

* Note Wordsworth's love for the Established Church of England, and compare the Ecclesiastical Sonnets.—ED.

† See Wordsworth's Note p. 411.—ED.

(Depraved, and ever prone to fill the mind ¹
 Exclusively with transitory things)
 An air and mien of dignified pursuit;
 Of sweet civility, on rustic wilds.

The Poet, fostering for his native land
 Such hope, entreats that servants may abound
 Of those pure altars worthy; ministers
 Detached from pleasure, to the love of gain
 Superior, insusceptible of pride,
 And by ambitious longings ² undisturbed;
 Men, whose delight is where their duty leads
 Or fixes them; whose least distinguished day
 Shines with some portion of that heavenly lustre
 Which makes the sabbath lovely in the sight
 Of blessed angels, pitying human cares.
 —And, as on earth it is the doom of truth
 To be perpetually attacked by foes
 Open or covert, be that priesthood still,
 For her defence, replenished with a band
 Of strenuous champions, in scholastic arts
 Thoroughly disciplined; nor (if in course
 Of the revolving world's disturbances
 Cause should recur, which righteous Heaven avert!
 To meet such trial) from their spiritual sires
 Degenerate; who, constrained to wield the sword
 Of disputation, shrunk not, though assailed
 With hostile din, and combating in sight
 Of angry umpires, partial and unjust;

¹ 1836.

. to fill their minds

1814.

² 1827.

And by ambition's longings undisturbed

1814.

And did, thereafter, bathe their hands in fire,*
 So to declare the conscience satisfied :
 Nor for their bodies would accept release ;
 But, blessing God and praising him, bequeathed
 With their last breath, from out the smouldering flame,
 The faith which they by diligence had earned,
 Or,¹ through illuminating grace, received,
 For their dear countrymen, and all mankind.
 O high example, constancy divine !

Even such a Man (inheriting the zeal
 And from the sanctity of elder times
 Not deviating,—a priest, the like of whom
 If multiplied, and in their stations set,
 Would o'er the bosom of a joyful land
 Spread true religion and her genuine fruits)
 Before me stood that day ; on holy ground
 Fraught with the relics of mortality,
 Exalting tender themes, by just degrees
 To lofty raised ; and to the highest, last ;
 The head and mighty paramount of truths,—
 Immortal life, in never-fading worlds,
 For mortal creatures, conquered and secured.

That basis laid, those principles of faith
 Announced, as a preparatory act
 Of reverence done to the spirit of the place,²
 The Pastor cast his eyes upon the ground ;

¹ 1827.

And 1814.

² 1849.

Of reverence to the spirit of the place ; 1814.

Not, as before, like one oppressed with awe
 But with a mild and social cheerfulness ;
 Then to the Solitary turned, and spake.

“ At morn or eve, in your retired domain,
 Perchance you not unfrequently have marked
 A Visitor—in quest of herbs and flowers ;¹
 Too delicate employ, as would appear,
 For one, who, though of drooping mien, had yet
 From nature’s kindness received a frame
 Robust as ever rural labour bred.”

The solitary answered : “ Such a Form
 Full well I recollect. We often crossed
 Each other’s path ; but, as the Intruder seemed
 Fondly to prize the silence which he kept,
 And I as willingly did cherish mine,
 We met, and passed, like shadows. I have heard,
 From my good Host, that being crazed in brain
 By unrequited love, he scaled the rocks,²
 Dived into caves, and pierced the matted woods,
 In hope to find some virtuous herb of power
 To cure his malady !”

The Vicar smiled,—

“ Alas ! before to-morrow’s sun goes down
 His habitation will be here : for him
 That open grave is destined.” *

¹ 1827.

A Visitor—intent upon the task
 Of prying, low and high, for herbs and flowers : 1814.

² 1836.

. , that he was crazed in brain
 By unrequited love ; and scaled the rocks, 1814.

* “ The story here is truly related. He was a school-fellow of mine for some years. He came to us when he was about seventeen years of age, very tall, robust, and full grown. This prevented him from falling into the

“Died he then

Of pain and grief?” the Solitary asked,

“Do not believe it; never could that be!”¹

“He loved,” the Vicar answered, “deeply loved,
Loved fondly, truly, fervently; and dared
At length to tell his love, but sued in vain;²
Rejected, yea repelled; and, if with scorn
Upon the haughty maiden’s brow, ’tis but
A high-prized plume which female Beauty wears
In wantonness of conquest, or puts on
To cheat the world, or from herself to hide
Humiliation, when no longer free.

That he could brook,³ and glory in;—but when
The tidings came that she whom he had wooed
Was wedded to another, and his heart
Was forced to rend away its only hope;
Then, Pity could have scarcely found on earth
An object worthier of regard than he,
In the transition of that bitter hour!
Lost was she, lost; nor could the Sufferer say

¹ 1836.

“Believe it not—oh! never could that be!”

1814.

² 1827.

. and pined,
When he had told his love, and sued in vain,

1814.

³ 1827.

. Beauty wears.
That he could brook,

1814.

amusements and games of the school; consequently, he gave more time to books. He was not remarkably bright or quick, but, by industry, he made a progress more than respectable. His parents not being wealthy enough to send him to college when he left Hawkshead, he became a schoolmaster, with a view to preparing himself for holy orders. About this time he fell in love, as related in the poem; and everything followed as there described, except that I do not know exactly when and where he died.” (I.F. M.S.)
—ED.

That in the act of preference he had been
 Unjustly dealt with ; but the Maid was gone !
 Had vanished ¹ from his prospects and desires ;
 Not by translation to the heavenly choir
 Who have put off their mortal spoils—ah no !
 She lives another's wishes to complete,—
 ' Joy be their lot, and happiness,' he cried,
 ' His lot and hers, as misery must be mine !' ²

Such was that strong concussion ; but the Man,
 Who trembled, trunk and limbs, like some huge oak
 By a fierce tempest shaken, soon resumed
 The stedfast quiet natural to a mind
 Of composition gentle and sedate,
 And, in its movements, circumspect and slow.
 To books, and to the long-forsaken desk,
 O'er which enchained by science he had loved
 To bend, he stoutly re-addressed himself,
 Resolved to quell his pain, and search for truth
 With keener appetite (if that might be)
 And closer industry. Of what ensued
 Within the heart ³ no outward sign appeared

¹ 1827.

. ; but the maid was gone !
 She, whose dear name with unregarded sighs
 He long had blessed, whose Image was preserved—
 Shrined in his breast with fond idolatry,
 Had vanished 1814.

² 1849.

. as misery is mine ! 1814.

³ 1827.

. circumspect and slow.
 Of rustic Parents bred, He had been trained,
 (So prompted their aspiring wish) to skill
 In numbers and the sedentary art
 Of penmanship,— with pride professed, and taught
 By his endeavours in the mountain dales.

Till a betraying sickliness was seen
 To tinge his cheek ; and through his frame it crept
 With slow mutation unconcealable ;
 Such universal change as autumn makes
 In the fair body of a leafy grove,
 Discoloured, then divested.

'Tis affirmed

By poets skilled in nature's secret ways
 That Love will not submit to be controlled
 By mastery :—and the good Man lacked not friends
 Who strove to instil this truth into his mind,
 A mind in all heart-mysteries unversed.
 'Go to the hills,' said one, 'remit a while
 This baneful diligence :—at early morn
 Court the fresh air, explore the heaths and woods ;
 And, leaving it to others to foretell,
 By calculations sage, the ebb and flow
 Of tides, and when the moon will be eclipsed,
 Do you, for your own benefit, construct
 A calendar of flowers, plucked as they blow
 Where health abides, and cheerfulness, and peace.'
 The attempt was made ;—'tis needless to report
 How hopelessly ; but innocence is strong,
 And an entire simplicity of mind
 A thing most sacred in the eye of Heaven,
 That opens, for such sufferers, relief
 Within the soul, fountains of grace divine ;¹

Now, those sad tidings weighing on his heart,
 To books, and papers, and the studious desk,
 He stoutly re-addressed himself, resolved
 To quell his pain, and enter on the path
 Of old pursuits with keener appetite
 And closer industry. Of what ensued
 Within his soul,

1814.

¹ 1836.

Within their souls, a fount of grace divine ;

1814.

And doth commend their weakness and disease
 To Nature's care, assisted in her office
 By all the elements that round her wait
 To generate, to preserve, and to restore ;
 And by her beautiful array of forms
 Shedding sweet influence from above ; or pure
 Delight exhaling from the ground they tread."

"Impute it not to impatience, if," exclaimed
 The Wanderer, "I infer that he was healed
 By perseverance in the course prescribed."

"You do not err: the powers, that had been lost¹
 By slow degrees, were gradually regained ;
 The fluttering nerves composed ; the beating heart
 In rest established ; and the jarring thoughts
 To harmony restored.—But yon dark mould
 Will cover him; in the fulness of his strength,²
 Hastily smitten by a fever's force ;
 Yet not with stroke so sudden as refused
 Time to look back with tenderness on her
 Whom he had loved in passion ; and to send
 Some farewell words—with one, but one, request ;³
 That, from his dying hand, she would accept
 Of his possessions that which most he prized ;
 A book, upon whose leaves some chosen plants,
 By his own hand disposed with nicest care,⁴

¹ 1827.

. . . . , which had been lost 1814.

² 1832.

Will cover him ; in height of strength to earth 1814.

³ 1827.Some farewell words ; and, with those words a prayer
1814.⁴ 1827.A Book upon the surface of whose leaves
Some chosen plants, disposed with nicest care, 1814.

In undecaying beauty were preserved ; *
 Mute register, to him, of time and place,
 And various fluctuations in the breast ;
 To her, a monument of faithful love
 Conquered, and in tranquillity retained !

Close to his destined habitation, lies
 One who achieved a humbler victory,
 Though marvellous in its kind. A place there is ¹
 High in these mountains, that allured a band
 Of keen adventurers to unite their pains
 In search of precious ore : they tried, were foiled— ²
 And all desisted, all, save him alone.
 He ³ taking counsel of his own clear thoughts,
 And trusting only to his own weak hands,
 Urged unremittingly the stubborn work,
 Unseconded, uncountenanced ; then, as time
 Passed on, while still his lonely efforts found
 No recompense, derided ; and at length,

¹ 1827.

One whose endeavours did at length achieve
 A victory less worthy of regard,
 Though marvellous in its kind. A Place exists 1814.

² 1836.

In search of treasure there by Nature formed,
 And there concealed: but they who tried were foiled, 1814.
 to unite their pains
 In search of precious ore : who tried were foiled, 1827.

³ 1827.

. save he alone,
 Who 1814.

* Compare, in Keble's *Christian Year*, "Forms of Prayer to be used at Sea."

"Far, far away, the home-sick seaman's hoard,
 Thy fragrant tokens live,
 Like flower-leaves in a precious volume stored,
 To solace and relieve," &c.

By many pitied, as insane of mind ;
 By others dreaded as the luckless thrall
 Of subterranean Spirits feeding hope
 By various mockery of sight and sound ;
 Hope after hope, encouraged and destroyed.
 —But when the lord of seasons had matured
 The fruits of earth through space of twice ten years,
 The mountain's entrails offered to his view
 And trembling grasp the long-deferred reward.¹
 Not with more transport did Columbus greet
 A world, his rich discovery !* But our Swain,
 A very hero till his point was gained,
 Proved all unable to support the weight
 Of prosperous fortune. On the fields he looked
 With an unsettled liberty of thought,
 Wishes and endless schemes ; by daylight walked²
 Giddy and restless ; ever and anon
 Quaffed in his gratitude immoderate cups ;
 And truly might be said to die of joy !
 He vanished ; but conspicuous to this day
 The path remains that linked his cottage-door
 To the mine's mouth ; a long and slanting track,
 Upon the rugged mountain's stony side,
 Worn by his daily visits to and from
 The darksome centre of a constant hope.

¹ 1827.

. to the view
 Of the Old Man, and to his trembling grasp,
 His bright, his long-deferred, his dear reward. 1814.

² 1836.

Of schemes and wishes ; in the day-light walked. 1814.

* "The Miner, described, as having found his treasure after twice ten years of labour, lived in Paterdale, and the story is true to the letter. It seems to me, however, rather remarkable that the strength of mind which had supported him through his long unrewarded labour, did not enable him to bear its successful issue." (I.F. MS.)—Ed.

This vestige, neither force of beating rain,
 Nor the vicissitudes of frost and thaw
 Shall cause to fade, till ages pass away ;
 And it is named, in memory of the event,
 The PATH OF PERSEVERANCE."

"Thou from whom
 Man has his strength," exclaimed the Wanderer, "oh !
 Do thou direct it ! To the virtuous grant
 The penetrative eye which can perceive
 In this blind world the guiding vein of hope ;
 That, like this Labourer, such may dig their way,
 ' Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified ;'
 Grant to the wise *his* firmness of resolve !"

"That prayer were not superfluous," said the Priest,
 "Amid the noblest relics, proudest dust,
 That Westminster, for Britain's glory, holds
 Within the bosom of her awful pile,
 Ambitiously collected. Yet the sigh,
 Which wafts that prayer to heaven, is due to all,
 Wherever laid, who living fell below
 Their virtue's humbler mark ; a sigh of *pain*
 If to the opposite extreme they sank.
 How would you pity her who yonder rests ;
 Him, farther off ; the pair, who here are laid ;
 But, above all, that mixture of earth's mould
 Whom sight of this green hillock to my mind
 Recals !

He lived not till his locks were nipped
 By seasonable frost of age ; nor died
 Before his temples, prematurely forced
 To mix the manly brown with silver grey,
 Gave obvious instance of the sad effect
 Produced, when thoughtless Folly had usurped

The natural crown that ¹ sage Experience wears.
 Gay, volatile, ingenious, quick to learn,
 And prompt to exhibit all that he possessed
 Or could perform ; a zealous actor, hired
 Into the troop of mirth, a soldier, sworn
 Into the lists of giddy enterprise—
 Such was he ; † yet, as if within his frame
 Two several souls alternately had lodged,
 Two sets of manners could the Youth put on ;
 And, fraught with antics as the Indian bird
 That writhes and chatters in her wiry cage,
 Was graceful, when it pleased him, smooth and still
 As the mute swan that floats adown the stream,
 Or, on the waters of the unruffled lake,
 Anchors her placid beauty. Not a leaf,
 That flutters on the bough, lighter than he ; ²
 And not a flower, that droops in the green shade,
 More winningly reserved ! If ye enquire
 How such consummate elegance was bred
 Amid these wilds, this answer may suffice ;
 'Twas Nature's will ; ³ who sometimes undertakes,

¹ 1827.

. hath usurped
 The natural crown which 1814.

² 1843.

. more light than he ; 1814.

³ 1827.

Amid these wilds ; a composition framed
 Of qualities so diverse — to diffuse,
 Where'er he moved, diversified delight ;
 A simple answer may suffice, even this,
 'Twas Nature's will ; 1814.

† “The next character to whom the priest is led by contrast with the resoluteness displayed by the foregoing is taken from a person born and bred in Grasmere, by name Dawson, and whose talents, dispositions, and way of life were such as is here delineated. I did not know him, but all was fresh in memory when we settled at Grasmere in the beginning of the century.” (I.F. MS.)—ED.

For the reproof of human vanity,
Art to outstrip in her peculiar walk.
Hence, for this Favourite—lavishly endowed
With personal gifts, and bright instinctive wit,
While both, embellishing each other, stood
Yet farther recommended by the charm
Of fine demeanour, and by dance and song,
And skill in letters—every fancy shaped
Fair expectations; nor, when to the world's
Capacious field forth went the Adventurer, there
Were he and his attainments overlooked,
Or scantily rewarded; but all hopes,
Cherished for him, he suffered to depart,
Like blighted buds; or clouds that mimicked land
Before the sailor's eye; or diamond drops
That sparkling decked the morning grass; or aught
That *was* attractive, and hath ceased to be!

Yet, when this Prodigal returned, the rites
Of joyful greeting were on him bestowed,
Who, by humiliation undeterred,
Sought for his weariness a place of rest
Within his Father's gates.—Whence came he?—clothed
In tattered garb, from hovels where abides
Necessity, the stationary host
Of vagrant poverty; from rifted barns
Where no one dwells but the wide-staring owl
And the owl's prey; from these bare haunts, to which¹
He had descended from the proud saloon,
He came, the ghost of beauty and of health,
The wreck of gaiety! But soon revived

¹ 1827.

And the Owl's Prey; none permanently house
By many harbours, from these Haunts, to which 1814.

In strength, in power refitted, he renewed
 His suit to Fortune ; and she smiled again
 Upon a fickle Ingrate. Thrice he rose,
 Thrice sank¹ as willingly. For he—whose nerves
 Were used to thrill with pleasure, while his voice
 Softly accompanied the tuneful harp,
 By the nice finger of fair ladies touched
 In glittering halls—was able to derive
 No² less enjoyment from an abject choice.
 Who happier for the moment—who more blithe
 Than this fallen Spirit ? in those dreary holds
 His talents lending to exalt the freaks
 Of merry-making beggars,—now, provoked
 To laughter multiplied in louder peals
 By his malicious wit ; then, all enchained
 With mute astonishment, themselves to see
 In their own arts outdone, their fame eclipsed,
 As by the very presence of the Fiend
 Who dictates and inspires illusive feats,
 For knavish purposes ! The city, too,
 (With shame I speak it) to her guilty bowers
 Allured him, sunk so low in self-respect
 As there to linger, there to eat his bread,
 Hired minstrel of voluptuous blandishment ;
 Charming the air with skill of hand or voice,
 Listen who would, be wrought upon who might,
 Sincerely wretched hearts, or falsely gay.
 —Such the too frequent tenour of his boast³

¹ 1827.

Thrice sunk, 1814.

² 1832.

Not 1814.

³ 1827.

— Truths I record to many known, for such
 The not unfrequent tenor of his boast . . . 1814.

In ears that relished the report ;—but all
 Was from his Parents happily concealed ;
 Who saw enough for blame and pitying love.
 They also were permitted to receive
 His last, repentant breath ; and closed his eyes,
 No more to open on that irksome world
 Where he had long existed in the state
 Of a young fowl beneath one mother hatched,
 Though from another sprung, different in kind :¹
 Where he had lived, and could not cease to live,
 Distracted in propensity ; content
 With neither element of good or ill ;
 And yet in both rejoicing ; man unblest ;
 Of contradictions infinite the slave,
 Till his deliverance, when Mercy made him
 One with himself, and one with them that sleep.”²

“ ’Tis strange,” observed the Solitary, “ strange
 It seems, and scarcely less than pitiful,
 That in a land where charity provides
 For all that³ can no longer feed themselves,
 A man like this should choose to bring his shame
 To the parental door ; and with his sighs
 Infect the air which he had freely breathed
 In happy infancy. He could not pine,
 Through lack of converse ;⁴ no—he must have found

¹ 1836.

. of different kind : 1814.

² 1836.

. with those who sleep.” 1814.

. with them who sleep. 1827.

³ 1827.

For all who 1814.

⁴ 1827.. He could not pine,
 Whence'er rejected howsoe'er forlorn,
 Through lack of converse, 1814.

Abundant exercise for thought and speech,
 In his dividual being, self-reviewed,
 Self-catechised, self-punished.—Some there are
 Who, drawing near their final home, and much
 And daily longing that the same were reached,
 Would rather shun than seek the fellowship
 Of kindred mould.—Such haply here are laid ?”

“ Yes,” said the Priest, “ the Genius of our hills—
 Who seems, by these stupendous barriers cast
 Round his domain, desirous not alone
 To keep his own, but also to exclude
 All other progeny—doth sometimes lure,
 Even by his¹ studied depth of privacy,
 The unhappy alien hoping to obtain
 Concealment, or seduced by wish to find,
 In place from outward molestation free,
 Helps to internal ease. Of many such
 Could I discourse ; but as their stay was brief,
 So their departure only left behind
 Fancies, and loose conjectures. Other trace
 Survives, for worthy mention, of a pair
 Who, from the pressure of their several fates,
 Meeting as strangers, in a petty town*
 Whose blue roofs ornament a distant reach
 Of this far-winding vale,* remained as friends
 True to their choice ; and gave their bones in trust
 To this loved cemetery, here to lodge
 With unescutcheoned privacy interred

¹ 1849.

Even by this 1814.

* Hawkshead. The series of small valleys from Dunmail Raise to Esthwaite is described as one “ far-winding vale.”—Ed.

Far from the family vault.—A Chieftain one *
By right of birth ; within whose spotless breast
The fire of ancient Caledonia burned :
He, with the foremost whose impatience hailed
The Stuart, landing to resume, by force
Of arms, the crown which bigotry had lost,
Aroused his clan ; and, fighting at their head,
With his brave sword endeavoured to prevent
Culloden's fatal overthrow. Escaped
From that disastrous rout, to foreign shores
He fled ; and when the lenient hand of time
Those troubles had appeased, he sought and gained,
For his obscured condition, an obscure
Retreat, within this nook of English ground.

The other, born in Britain's southern tract,
Had fixed his milder loyalty, and placed
His gentler sentiments of love and hate,
There, where *they* placed them who in conscience prized
The new succession, as a line of kings
Whose oath had virtue to protect the land
Against the dire assaults of papacy
And arbitrary rule. But launch thy bark
On the distempered flood of public life,
And cause for most rare triumph will be thine
If, spite of keenest eye and steadiest hand,
The stream, that bears thee forward, prove not, soon
Or late, a perilous master. He—who oft,

* "Two individuals, who by their several fortunes were, at different times, driven to take refuge in the small and obscure town of Hawkshead, on the skirt of these mountains. Their stories I had from the dear old dame with whom, as a schoolboy, and afterwards, I lodged for the space of nearly ten years. The elder, the Jacobite, was named Drummond, and was of a high family in Scotland."—I. F. MS.—Ed.

Beneath¹ the battlements and stately trees
 That round his mansion cast a sober gloom,
 Had moralised on this, and other truths
 Of kindred import, pleased and satisfied—
 Was forced to vent his wisdom with a sigh
 Heaved from the heart in fortune's bitterness,
 When he had crushed a plentiful estate
 By ruinous contest, to obtain a seat
 In Britain's senate. Fruitless was the attempt:
 And while the uproar of that desperate strife
 Continued yet to vibrate on his ear,
 The vanquished Whig,* under a borrowed name,²
 (For the mere sound and echo of his own
 Haunted him with sensations of disgust
 That³ he was glad to lose) slunk from the world
 To the deep shade of those untravelled Wilds;⁴
 In which the Scottish Laird had long possessed
 An undisturbed abode. Here, then, they met,
 Two doughty champions; flaming Jacobite
 And sullen Hanoverian! You might think
 That losses and vexations, less severe
 Than those which they had severally sustained,
 Would have inclined each to abate his zeal
 For his ungrateful cause; no,—I have heard
 My reverend Father tell that, 'mid the calm

¹ 1836.

Under 1814.

² 1836.. . . . , beneath a *borrowed name*, 1814.³ 1827.

Which 1814.

⁴ 1836.

. . . . of these untravelled Wilds; 1814.

* "The Hanoverian Whig bore the name of Vandeput (Sir George Vandeput), and might, perhaps, be a descendant of some Dutchman who had come over in the train of King William."—I. F. MS.—Ed.

Of that small town encountering thus, they filled,
 Daily, its bowling-green with harmless strife ;
 Plagued with uncharitable thoughts the church ;
 And vexed the market-place. But in the breasts
 Of these opponents gradually was wrought,
 With little change of general sentiment,
 Such leaning towards each other,¹ that their days
 By choice were spent in constant fellowship ;
 And if, at times, they fretted with the yoke,
 Those very bickerings made them love it more.

A favourite boundary to their lengthened walks
 This Church-yard was. And, whether they had come
 Treading their path in sympathy and linked
 In social converse, or by some short space
 Discreetly parted to preserve the peace,
 One spirit seldom failed to extend its sway
 Over both minds, when they awhile had marked
 The visible quiet of this holy ground,
 And breathed its soothing air :—the spirit of hope
 And saintly magnanimity ; that—spurning
 The field of selfish difference and dispute,
 And every care which transitory things,
 Earth and the kingdoms of the earth, create—
 Doth, by a rapture of forgetfulness,
 Preclude forgiveness, from the praise debarred,
 Which else the Christian virtue might have claimed.

There live who yet remember here to have seen
 Their courtly figures, seated on the stump
 Of an old yew, their favourite resting-place.
 But as the remnant of the long-lived tree
 Was disappearing by a swift decay,

¹ 1849.

Such change towards 1814.

They, with joint care, determined to erect,
 Upon its site, a dial,* that might stand
 For public use preserved, and thus survive¹
 As their own private monument: for this
 Was the particular spot, in which they wished
 (And Heaven was pleased to accomplish the desire)
 That, undivided, their remains should lie.
 So, where the mouldered tree had stood, was raised
 Yon structure, framing, with the ascent of steps
 That to the decorated pillar* lead,
 A work of art more sumptuous than might seem
 To suit this place;² yet built in no proud scorn
 Of rustic homeliness; they only aimed
 To ensure for it respectful guardianship.
 Around the margin of the plate, whereon
 The shadow falls to note the stealthy hours,
 Winds an inscriptive legend."—At these words
 Thither we turned; and gathered, as we read,
 The appropriate sense, in Latin numbers couched:
*"Time flies; it is his melancholy task
 To bring, and bear away, delusive hopes,
 And re-produce the troubles he destroys.
 But, while his blindness thus is occupied,
 Discerning Mortal! do thou serve the will
 Of Time's eternal Master, and that peace,
 Which the world wants, shall be for thee confirmed!"*

¹ 1827.

. which should stand
 For public use; and also might survive

1814.

² 1827.

. , as might seem,
 Than suits this Place;

1814.

* Of this "dial" as of the "decorated pillar" there is no trace in Grasmere churchyard, and no tradition of either. There is a pillar in Bowness churchyard in which a dial used to stand, and Wordsworth may have blended his descriptions of Grasmere with remembrances of Bowness.

“Smooth verse, inspired by no unlettered Muse,”
 Exclaimed the Sceptic, “and the strain of thought
 Accords with nature’s language;—the soft voice
 Of yon white torrent falling down the rocks*
 Speaks, less distinctly, to the same effect.
 If, then, their blended influence be not lost
 Upon our hearts, not wholly lost, I grant,
 Even upon mine, the more are we required
 To feel for those among our fellow-men,
 Who, offering no obeisance to the world,
 Are yet made desperate by ‘too quick a sense
 Of constant infelicity,’ cut off
 From peace like exiles on some barren rock,
 Their life’s appointed prison; not more free
 Than sentinels, between two armies, set,
 With nothing better, in the chill night air,
 Than their own thoughts to comfort them. Say why
 That ancient story of Prometheus† chained
 To the bare rock, on frozen Caucasus;
 The vulture,¹ the inexhaustible repast
 Drawn from his vitals? Say what meant the woes
 By Tantalus‡ entailed upon his race,

¹ 1849.

. of Prometheus chained?
 The Vulture—

1814.

* This may be an allusion to Wray Ghyll Force, which descends between Silver How and Easedale. No other white torrent falling down rocks is visible from the Grasmere churchyard. This one is distinctly seen, when looking towards Silver How to the west.—ED.

† Prometheus, son of the Titan Iapetus, outwitted Jupiter, stealing fire from heaven, &c. Jupiter, in revenge, caused Vulcan to chain him to a rock in the Caucasus, where an eagle or vulture preyed on his liver daily. See *Æsch. Prom.* Compare “Prometheus tied to Caucasus,” Titus Andronicus, Act ii. sc. 1.—ED.

‡ Tantalus, son of Jupiter, punished for disclosing his father’s secrets, by being placed after death up to the chin in the waters of a lake, which withdrew whenever he attempted to drink, while boughs laden with fruit hung above his head, and were tossed from him by the wind whenever he tried to grasp them.—ED.

And the dark sorrows of the line of Thebes ? *
 Fictions in form, but in their substance truths,
 Tremendous truths ! familiar to the men
 Of long-past times, nor obsolete in ours.
 Exchange the shepherd's frock of native grey
 For robes with regal purple tinged ; convert
 The crook into a sceptre ; give the pomp
 Of circumstance ; and here the tragic Muse
 Shall find apt subjects for her highest art.
 Amid the groves, under the shadowy hills,¹
 The generations are prepared ; the pangs,
 The internal pangs, are ready ; the dread strife
 Of poor humanity's afflicted will
 Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny."

"Though," said the Priest in answer, "these be terms
 Which a divine philosophy rejects,
 We, whose established and unfailing trust
 Is in controlling Providence, admit
 That, through all stations, human life abounds
 With mysteries ;—for, if Faith were left untried,
 How could the might, that lurks within her, then
 Be shown ? her glorious excellence—that ranks
 Among the first of Powers and Virtues—proved ?
 Our system is not fashioned to preclude
 That sympathy which you for others ask ;
 And I could tell, not travelling for my theme

¹ 1836

. . . , beneath the shadowy hills

1814.

* "The dark sorrows of the line of Thebes" descended for three generations ; from Lais and Iocaste to Ædipus ; thence to Eteocles, Polynices, Antigone, and Ismene.

Compare Milton's lines in *Il Penseroso*, l. 96-100—

Some time let gorgeous Tragedy
 In scepter'd pall come sweeping by,
 Presenting Thebes, or Pelop's line,
 Or the tale of Troy divine.

—ED.

Beyond these humble graves, of grievous crimes
 And strange disasters;¹ but I pass them by,
 Loth to disturb what Heaven hath hushed in peace.
 —Still less, far less, am I inclined to treat
 Of Man degraded in his Maker's sight
 By the deformities of brutish vice:
 For, in such portraits, though a vulgar face²
 And a coarse outside of repulsive life
 And unaffected manners might at once³
 Be recognised by all—" Ah! do not think,"
 The Wanderer somewhat eagerly exclaimed,
 "Wish could be ours that you, for such poor gain,
 (Gain shall I call it?—gain of what?—for whom?)
 Should breathe a word tending to violate
 Your own pure spirit. Not a step we look for
 In slight of that forbearance and reserve
 Which common human-heartedness inspires,
 And mortal ignorance and frailty claim,
 Upon this sacred ground, if nowhere else."

"True," said the Solitary, "be it far
 From us to infringe the laws of charity.
 Let judgment here in mercy be pronounced;
 This, self-respecting Nature prompts, and this
 Wisdom enjoins; but if the thing we seek
 Be genuine knowledge, bear we then in mind
 How, from his lofty throne, the sun can fling
 Colours as bright on exhalations bred

¹ 1827.

Beyond the limits of these humble graves,
 Of strange disasters ;

1814.

² 1827.

For, though from these materials might be framed
 Harsh portraiture, in which a vulgar face

1814.

³ 1820.

. may at once

1814.

By weedy pool or pestilential swamp,
As by the rivulet sparkling where it runs,
Or the pellucid lake."

"Small risk," said I,
"Of such illusion do we here incur ;
Temptation here is none to exceed the truth ;
No evidence appears that they who rest
Within this ground, were covetous of praise,
Or of remembrance even, deserved or not.
Green is the Church-yard, beautiful and green,
Ridge rising gently by the side of ridge,
A heaving surface, almost wholly free
From interruption of sepulchral stones,
And mantled o'er with aboriginal turf
And everlasting flowers.* These Dalesmen trust
The lingering gleam of their departed lives
To oral record,¹ and the silent heart ;
Depositories² faithful and more kind
Than fondest epitaph : for, if those fail,³
What boots the sculptured tomb ? And who can blame,
Who rather would not envy, men that feel
This mutual confidence ; if, from such source,
The practice flow,—if thence, or from a deep

¹ 1836.

To oral records 1814.

² 1836.

Depository 1814.

³ 1836.

Than fondest Epitaphs : for, if it fail, 1814.

Than fondest epitaphs : for, if that fail, 1827.

* Grasmere churchyard was, in Wordsworth's time,

almost wholly free

From interruption of sepulchral stones.

Compare the Fenwick note to the *Epistle to Sir George Beaumont* (Vol. IV. p. 250). Dr Cradock writes—"I cannot count more than two or three gravestones of earlier date than 1800. Most of the others are of a much more recent date."—ED.

And general humility in death ?
 Nor should I much condemn it, if it spring
 From disregard of time's destructive power,
 As only capable to prey on things
 Of earth, and human nature's mortal part.

Yet—in less simple districts, where we see
 Stone lift its forehead emulous of stone*
 In courting notice ; and the ground all paved
 With commendations of departed worth ;
 Reading, where'er we turn, of innocent lives,
 Of each domestic charity fulfilled,
 And sufferings meekly borne—I, for my part,
 Though with the silence pleased that here prevails,¹
 Among those fair recitals also range,
 Soothed by the natural spirit which they breathe.
 And, in the centre of a world whose soil
 Is rank with all unkindness, compassed round
 With such memorials, I have sometimes felt,
 It was² no momentary happiness
 To have *one* Enclosure where the voice that speaks
 In envy or detraction is not heard ;
 Which malice may not enter ; where the traces
 Of evil inclinations are unknown ;
 Where love and pity tenderly unite
 With resignation ; and no jarring tone
 Intrudes, the peaceful concert to disturb
 Of amity and gratitude.”

¹ 1827.

. which here prevails, 1814.

² 1832.

That 'twas 1814.

* Was he thinking of such a spectacle as Crosthwaite churchyard now presents?—ED.

“Thus sanctioned,”

The Pastor said, “I willingly confine
My narratives to subjects that excite
Feelings with these accordant; love, esteem,
And admiration; lifting up a veil,
A sunbeam introducing among hearts
Retired and covert; so that ye shall have
Clear images before your gladdened eyes
Of nature’s unambitious underwood,
And flowers that prosper in the shade. And when
I speak of such among my flock as swerved
Or fell, those only shall be singled out¹
Upon whose lapse, or error, something more
Than brotherly forgiveness may attend;
To such will we restrict our notice, else
Better my tongue were mute.

And yet there are,
I feel, good reasons why we should not leave
Wholly untraced a more forbidding way.
For, strength to persevere and to support,
And energy to conquer and repel—
These elements of virtue, that declare
The native grandeur of the human soul—
Are oft-times not unprofitably shown
In the perverseness of a selfish course:
Truth every day exemplified, no less
In the grey cottage by the murmuring stream
Than in² fantastic conqueror’s roving camp,
Or ’mid³ the factious senate, unappalled

¹ 1836.

. will I single out 1814.

² 1827.

Than the 1814.

³ 1827.

Or in 1814.

Whoe'er may sink, or rise—to sink again,¹
As² merciless proscription ebbs and flows.

There," said the Vicar, pointing as he spake,
"A woman rests in peace; surpassed by few
In power of mind, and eloquent discourse.
Tall was her stature; her complexion dark
And saturnine;* her head not raised to hold³
Converse with heaven, nor yet deprest towards earth,
But in projection carried, as she walked
For ever musing. Sunken were her eyes;
Wrinkled and furrowed with habitual thought
Was her broad forehead; like the brow of one
Whose visual nerve shrinks from a painful glare
Of overpowering light.—While yet a child,
She, 'mid the humble flowerets of the vale,
Towered like the imperial thistle, not unfurnished
With its appropriate grace, yet rather seeking⁴
To be admired, than coveted and loved.
Even at that age she ruled, a sovereign queen,
Over her comrades;⁵ else their simple sports,

¹ This line first inserted in 1849.

² 1849.

While 1814.

³ 1827.

And saturnine; her port erect, her head
Not absolutely raised, as if to hold 1814.

⁴ 1827.

. yet rather framed 1814.

⁵ 1832.

. as sovereign Queen
Among her Play-mates; 1814.

. as sovereign queen

'Mid her companions; 1827.

* "This person lived at Town-End, and was almost our next neighbour. She was a most striking instance of how far a woman may surpass in talent, in knowledge, and culture of mind, those with and among whom she lives, and yet fall below them in Christian virtues of the heart and spirit."—I. F. MS.—Ed.

Wanting all relish for her strenuous mind,
 Had crossed her only to be shunned with scorn.¹
 —Oh ! pang of sorrowful regret for those²
 Whom, in their youth, sweet study has enthralled,
 That they have lived for harsher servitude,
 Whether in soul, in body, or estate !
 Such doom was hers ; yet nothing could subdue
 Her keen desire of knowledge, nor efface³
 Those brighter images by books imprest
 Upon her memory, faithfully as stars
 That occupy their places, and, though oft
 Hidden by clouds, and oft bedimmed by haze,
 Are not to be extinguished, nor impaired.⁴

Two passions, both degenerate, for they both
 Began in honour, gradually obtained
 Rule over her, and vexed her daily life ;
 An unremitting,⁵ avaricious thrift ;
 And a strange thralldom of maternal love,
 That held her spirit, in its own despite,
 Bound—by vexation, and regret, and scorn,

¹ 1827.

. else their simple sports
 Had wanted power to occupy a mind
 Held in subjection by a strong control
 Of studious application, self-imposed.
 Books were her creditors ; to them she paid,
 With pleasing, anxious eagerness, the hours
 Which they exacted ; were it time allowed,
 Or seized upon by stealth, or fairly won,
 By stretch of industry, from other tasks.

1814.

² 1827.

. for them

1814.

³ 1827.

. or efface

1814.

⁴ 1832.

. or impaired.

1814.

⁵ 1836.

An unrelenting

1814.

Constrained forgiveness, and relenting vows,
 And tears, in pride suppressed, in shame concealed—
 To a poor dissolute Son, her only child.
 —Her wedded days had opened with mishap,
 Whence dire dependence. What could she perform
 To shake the burthen off? Ah! there was felt,
 Indignantly, the weakness of her sex.
 She mused, resolved, adhered to her resolve;
 The hand grew slack in alms-giving, the heart
 Closed by degrees to charity; heaven's blessing
 Not seeking from that source, she placed her trust ¹
 In ceaseless pains—and strictest parsimony
 Which sternly hoarded all that could be spared,
 From each day's need, out of each day's least gain.²

Thus all was re-established, and a pile
 Constructed, that sufficed for every end,
 Save the contentment of the builder's mind;
 A mind by nature indisposed to aught
 So placid, so inactive, as content;
 A mind intolerant of lasting peace,
 And cherishing the pang her heart deplored.³
 Dread life of conflict! which I oft compared
 To the agitation of a brook that runs
 Down a rocky mountain, buried now and lost

¹ 1827.

. Ah! there she felt,
 Indignantly, the weakness of her sex,
 The injustice of her low estate.—She mused;
 Resolved, adhered to her resolve; her heart
 Closed by degrees to charity; and, thence
 Expecting not Heaven's blessing, placed her trust 1814.

² 1836.

In ceaseless pains and parsimonious care,
 Which got, and sternly hoarded each day's gain. 1814.

³ 1836.

. which it deplored. 1814.

In silent pools, now in strong eddies chained ;¹
 But never to be charmed to gentleness :
 Its best attainment fits of such repose
 As timid eyes might shrink from fathoming ;² *

A sudden illness seized her in the strength
 Of life's autumnal season.—Shall I tell
 How on her bed of death the Matron lay,
 To Providence submissive, so she thought ;
 But fretted, vexed, and wrought upon, almost
 To anger, by the malady that griped
 Her prostrate frame with unrelaxing power,
 As the fierce eagle fastens on the lamb ?
 She prayed, she moaned ;—her husband's sister watched
 Her dreary pillow, waited on her needs ;
 And yet the very sound of that kind foot
 Was anguish to her ears ! ‘ And must she rule,’
 This was the death-doomed.³ Woman heard to say
 In bitterness, ‘ and must she rule and reign,
 ‘ Sole Mistress of this house when I am gone ?
 ‘ Tend what I tended,⁴ calling it her own !’

¹ 1836.

Down rocky mountains—buried now and lost	
In silent pools, unfathomably deep ;—	1814.
. and now in eddies chained	1827.
. now in strong eddies chained	1832.

² 1827.

Now in a moment starting forth again	
With violence, and proud of its escape ;—	
Until it sink once more, by slow degrees,	
Or instantly, into as dark repose.	1814.

³ 1849.

This was the dying	1814.
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⁴ 1849.

. , when I am gone ?	
“ Sit by my fire—possess what I possessed—	
“ Tend what I tended—	1814.

* As is notably the case with the beck in Tongue Ghyll.—ED.

Enough ;—I fear, too much.—One vernal evening,¹
 While she was yet in prime of health and strength,
 I well remember, while I passed her door
 Alone,² with loitering step, and upward eye
 Turned towards the planet Jupiter that hung
 Above the centre of the Vale, a voice
 Roused me, her voice ; it said, ‘ That glorious star
 In its untroubled element will shine
 As now it shines, when we are laid in earth
 And safe from all our sorrows.’ With a sigh
 She spake, yet, I believe, not unsustained
 By faith in glory that shall far transcend
 Aught by these perishable heavens disclosed
 To sight or mind. Nor less than care divine
 Is divine mercy. She, who had rebelled,
 Was into meekness softened and subdued ;
 Did, after trials not in vain prolonged,
 With resignation sink into the grave ;
 And³ her uncharitable acts, I trust,
 And harsh unkindnesses are all forgiven,
 Tho’, in this Vale, remembered with deep awe.”

THE Vicar paused ; and toward a seat advanced,
 A long stone-seat, fixed in the Church-yard wall ; *

¹ 1827.

. . . , too much.—Of nobler feeling
 Take this example.—One autumnal evening, 1814.

² 1849.

Musing 1814.

³ 1849.

“ And safe from all our sorrows,” She is safe,
 And 1814.

* This “long stone seat” (now a thing of the past) was fixed to the wall on the left of the south entrance-gate into the churchyard, and not, as might be supposed, on the opposite wall which reaches from the entrance-gate to the poet’s grave. The old wall was rebuilt, and the seat omitted, by the late rector.—ED.

Part shaded by cool sycamore, and part
 Offering a sunny resting-place to them¹
 Who seek the House of worship, while the bells
 Yet ring with all their voices, or before
 The last hath ceased its solitary knoll.
 Beneath the shade we all sate down;² and there,
 His office, uninvited, he resumed.

“As on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
 Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of March,
 Screened by its parent, so that little mound
 Lies guarded by its neighbour; the small heap
 Speaks for itself; an Infant there doth rest;
 The sheltering hillock is the Mother's grave.*
 If mild discourse, and manners that conferred
 A natural dignity on humblest rank;
 If gladsome spirits, and benignant looks,
 That for a face not beautiful did more
 Than beauty for the fairest face can do;
 And if religious tenderness of heart,
 Grieving for sin, and penitential tears
 Shed when the clouds had gathered and distained

¹ 1827.

The Vicar paused; and tow'ards a seat advanced,
 A long stone seat, framed in the Church-yard wall;
 Part under shady sycamore, and part
 Offering a place of rest in pleasant sunshine,
 Even as may suit the comers old or young 1814.

² 1836.

To this commodious resting-place he led;
 Where, by his side, we all sate down; . . . 1814.
 Under the shade we all sate down; . . . 1827.

* “The story was told to Mrs Wordsworth and my sister, by the sister of this unhappy young woman. Every particular was exactly as I have related. . . . She lived at Hawkshead.”—I. F. MS. See the whole of the Fenwick note, also Charles Lamb's remarks, quoted in Note H, in the Appendix to this volume.—ED.

The spotless ether of a maiden life ;
 If these may make a hallowed spot of earth
 More holy in the sight of God or Man ;
 Then, o'er that mould,¹ a sanctity shall brood
 Till the stars sicken at the day of doom.

Ah ! what a warning for a thoughtless man,
 Could field or grove, could any spot of earth,²
 Show to his eye an image of the pangs
 Which it hath witnessed ; * render back an echo
 Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod !
 There, by her innocent Baby's precious grave,
 And on the very turf³ that roofs her own,
 The Mother oft was seen to stand, or kneel
 In the broad day, a weeping Magdalene.⁴
 Now she is not ; the swelling turf reports
 Of the fresh shower, but of poor Ellen's tears
 Is silent ; nor is any vestige left
 Of the path worn by mournful tread of her
 Who, at her heart's light bidding, once had moved

¹ 1827.

Then, on that mold, 1814.

² 1832.

. , or any spot of earth, 1814.

³ 1849.

Yea, doubtless, on the turf 1814.

⁴ 1814-1849.

At prayer, a weeping Magdalene, C.

* Compare the Hon. Justice Coleridge's Reminiscences of a walk and conversation with Wordsworth (October 1836) in Easedale, where—at the pool, which many have identified as "Emma's Dell"—he said, "I have often thought what a solemn thing it would be if we could have brought to our mind at once all the scenes of distress and misery which any spot, however beautiful and calm before us, has been witness to since the beginning." (See Vol. II. p. 155.)—ED.

In virgin fearlessness, with step that seemed ¹
 Caught from the pressure of elastic turf
 Upon the mountains gemmed with morning dew,²
 In the prime hour of sweetest scents and airs.
 —Serious and thoughtful was her mind; and yet,
 By reconcilment exquisite and rare,
 The form, port, motions, of this Cottage-girl
 Were such as might have quickened and inspired
 A Titian's hand, addrest to picture forth
 Oread or Dryad glancing through the shade
 What time the hunter's earliest horn is heard
 Startling the golden hills.

A wide-spread elm

Stands in our valley, named THE JOYFUL TREE;³
 From dateless usage which our peasants hold
 Of giving welcome to the first of May
 By dances round its trunk.—And if the sky
 Permit, like honours, dance and song, are paid
 To the Twelfth Night, beneath the frosty stars
 Or the clear moon. The queen of these gay sports,
 If not in beauty yet in sprightly air,
 Was hapless Ellen.—No one touched the ground
 So deftly, and the nicest maiden's locks
 Less gracefully were braided;—but this praise,
 Methinks, would better suit another place.

¹ 1827.

Upon the pathway, of her mournful tread;
 Nor of that pace with which she once had moved
 In virgin fearlessness, a step that seemed

1814.

² 1827.

. wet with morning dew,

1814.

³ 1827.

When first the Hunter's startling horn is heard
 Upon the golden hills. A spreading Elm
 Stands in our Valley, called The Joyful Tree;
 An Elm distinguished by that festive name,

1814.

She loved, and fondly deemed herself beloved.
 —The road is dim, the current unperceived,
 The weakness painful and most pitiful,
 By which a virtuous woman, in pure youth
 May be delivered to distress and shame.
 Such fate was hers.—The last time Ellen danced,
 Among her equals, round THE JOYFUL TREE,
 She bore a secret burthen; and full soon
 Was left to tremble for a breaking vow,—
 Then, to bewail a sternly-broken vow,
 Alone, within her widowed Mother's house.
 It was the season of unfolding leaves,
 Of days advancing toward their utmost length,
 And small birds singing happily to mates
 Happy as they. With spirit-saddening power
 Winds pipe through fading woods; but those blithe notes¹
 Strike the deserted to the heart; I speak
 Of what I know, and what we feel within.
 —Beside the cottage in which Ellen dwelt
 'Stands a tall ash-tree; to whose topmost twig
 A thrush resorts, and annually chants,
 At morn and evening from that naked perch,
 While all the undergrove is thick with leaves,
 A time-beguiling ditty, for delight
 Of his fond partner, silent in the nest.
 —'Ah why,' said Ellen, sighing to herself,
 'Why do not words, and kiss, and solemn pledge;
 'And nature that is kind in woman's breast,

¹ 1836.

It was the season sweet, of budding leaves,
 Of days advancing tow'rds their utmost length,
 And small birds singing to their happy mates.
 Wild is the music of the autumnal wind
 Among the faded woods; but these blithe notes 1814.

 Of days advancing toward . . . 1832.

' And reason that in man is wise and good,
 ' And fear of him who is a righteous judge ;
 ' Why do not these prevail for human life,
 ' To keep two hearts together, that began
 ' Their spring-time with one love, and that have need
 ' Of mutual pity and forgiveness, sweet
 ' To grant, or be received ; while that poor bird—
 ' O come and hear him ! Thou who hast to me
 ' Been faithless, hear him, though a lowly creature,
 ' One of God's simple children that yet know not
 ' The universal Parent, how he sings
 ' As if he wished the firmament of heaven
 ' Should listen, and give back to him the voice
 ' Of his triumphant constancy and love ;
 ' The proclamation that he makes, how far
 ' His darkness doth transcend our fickle light !'

Such was the tender passage, not by me
 Repeated without loss of simple phrase,
 Which I perused, even as the words had been
 Committed by forsaken Ellen's hand
 To the blank margin of a Valentine,
 Bedropped with tears. 'Twill please you to be told
 That, studiously withdrawing from the eye
 Of all companionship, the Sufferer yet
 In lonely reading found a meek resource :
 How thankful for the warmth of summer days,
 When she could slip into the cottage-barn,
 And find a secret oratory there ;
 Or, in the garden, under friendly veil

¹ 1827.

. of summer days,
 And their long twilight !—friendly to that stealth
 With which she slipped into the Cottage-barn,
 And found a secret oratory there ;
 Or, in the garden, pored upon her book

1814.

Of their long twilight, pore upon her book ¹
 By the last lingering help of the open sky
 Until dark night ¹ dismissed her to her bed !
 Thus did a waking fancy sometimes lose
 The unconquerable pang of despised love.*

A kindlier passion opened on her soul ²
 When that poor Child was born. Upon its face
 She gazed ³ as on a pure and spotless gift
 Of unexpected promise, where a grief
 Or dread was all that had been thought of,—joy
 Far livelier than bewildered traveller feels,
 Amid a perilous waste that all night long
 Hath harassed him toiling through fearful storm,⁴
 When he beholds the first pale speck serene
 Of day-spring, in the gloomy east, revealed,
 And greets it with thanksgiving. ‘Till this hour,’
 Thus, in her Mother’s hearing Ellen spake,
 ‘ There was a stony region in my heart ;
 ‘ But He, at whose command the parchèd rock
 ‘ Was smitten, and poured forth a quenching stream,
 ‘ Hath softened that obduracy, and made
 ‘ Unlooked-for gladness in the desert place,
 ‘ To save the perishing ; and, henceforth, I breathe

¹ 1849.

. of open sky,
 Till the dark night 1814.

² 1814-1849.

A kindlier passion kindled on her soul C.

³ 1849.

She looked 1814.

⁴ 1827.

Far sweeter than bewildered Traveller feels
 Upon a perilous waste, where all night long
 Through darkness he hath toiled and fearful storm, 1814.

Compare Hamlet, Act iii. Sc. i.—

“The pang of despised love, the law’s delay.”

—ED.

‘ The air with cheerful spirit, for thy sake ¹
 ‘ My Infant ! and for that good Mother dear,
 ‘ Who bore me, and hath prayed for me in vain ;—
 ‘ Yet not in vain ; it shall not be in vain.’

She spake, nor was the assurance unfulfilled ;
And if heart-rending thoughts would oft return,
They stayed not long.—The blameless Infant grew ;
The Child whom Ellen and her Mother loved
They soon were proud of ; tended it and nursed ;
A soothing comforter, although forlorn ;
Like a poor singing-bird from distant lands ;
Or a choice shrub, which he, who passes by
With vacant mind, not seldom may observe
Fair-flowering in a thinly-peopled house,
Whose window, somewhat sadly, it adorns.

Through four months' space the Infant drew its food
From the maternal breast; then scruples rose;
Thoughts, which the rich are free from, came and crossed
The fond affection.² She no more could bear
By her offence to lay a twofold weight
On a kind parent willing to forget
Their slender means: so, to that parent's care
Trusting her child, she left their common home,
And undertook with dutiful content³
A Foster-mother's office.

'Tis, perchance,
Unknown to you that in these simple vales
The natural feeling of equality

1 1849.

. ; and, henceforth, I look
 Upon the light with cheerfulness, for thee 1814.

2 1836.

The sweet affection. 1814.

3 1849.

And with contented spirit undertook 1814.

Is by domestic service unimpaired ;*
 Yet, though such service be, with us, removed
 From sense of degradation, not the less
 The ungentle mind can easily find means
 To impose severe restraints and laws unjust,
 Which hapless Ellen now was doomed to feel :
 For (blinded by an over-anxious dread
 Of such excitement and divided thought
 As with her office would but ill accord)¹
 The pair, whose infant she was bound to nurse,
 Forbad her all communion with her own :
 Week after week,² the mandate they enforced.
 —So near! yet not allowed, upon that sight
 To fix her eyes—alas! 'twas hard to bear!
 But worse affliction must be borne—far worse ;
 For 'tis Heaven's will—that, after a disease
 Begun and ended within three days' space,
 Her child should die ; as Ellen now exclaimed,
 Her own—deserted child !—Once, only once,
 She saw it in that mortal malady ;
 And, on the burial day, could scarcely gain
 Permission to attend its obsequies.
 She reached the house, last of the funeral train ;
 And some one, as she entered, having chanced
 To urge unthinkingly their prompt departure,

¹ 1827.

In selfish blindness, for I will not say
 In naked and deliberate cruelty,

1814.

² 1827.

. with her own.
 They argued that such meeting would disturb
 The Mother's mind, distract her thoughts, and thus
 Unfit her for her duty—in which dread,
 Week after week,

1814.

* This custom still survives in the country ; sons working as servants on ground belonging to their parents, and receiving payment for it.—ED.

‘Nay,’ said she, with commanding look, a spirit
 Of anger never seen in her before,
 ‘Nay, ye must wait my time!’ and down she sate,
 And by the unclosed coffin kept her seat
 Weeping and looking, looking on and weeping,
 Upon the last sweet slumber of her Child,
 Until at length her soul was satisfied.

You see the Infant’s Grave ; and to this spot,
 The Mother, oft as she was sent abroad,
 On whatsoever errand, urged her steps :
 Hither she came ; here stood, and sometimes knelt¹
 In the broad day, a rueful Magdalene !
 So call her ; for not only she bewailed
 A mother’s loss, but mourned in bitterness
 Her own transgression ; penitent sincere
 As ever raised to heaven a streaming eye !
 —At length the parents of the foster-child,
 Noting that in despite of their commands
 She still renewed and could not but renew
 Those visitations, ceased to send her forth ;
 Or, to the garden’s narrow bounds, confined.
 I failed not to remind them that they erred ;
 For holy Nature might not thus be crossed,
 Thus wronged in woman’s breast : in vain I pleaded—
 But the green stalk of Ellen’s life was snapped,
 And the flower drooped ; as every eye could see,
 It hung its head in mortal languishment.
 —Aided by this appearance, I at length
 Prevailed : and, from those bonds released, she went

¹ 1836.

And whatsoe’er the errand, urged her steps :
 Hither she came ; and here she stood, or knelt 1814.

 here stood, and sometimes knelt 1832.

Home to her mother's house.

The Youth was fled ;

The rash betrayer could not face the shame
 Or sorrow which his senseless guilt had caused ;
 And little would his presence, or proof given
 Of a relenting soul, have now availed ;
 For, like a shadow, he was passed away
 From Ellen's thoughts ; had perished to her mind
 For all concerns of fear, or hope, or love,
 Save only those which to their common shame,
 And to his moral being appertained :
 Hope from that quarter would, I know, have brought
 A heavenly comfort ; there she recognised
 An unrelaxing bond, a mutual need ;
 There, and, as seemed, there only.

She had built,¹

Her fond maternal heart had built, a nest
 In blindness all too near the river's edge ;
 That work a summer flood with hasty swell
 Had swept away ; and now her Spirit longed
 For its last flight to heaven's security.
 —The bodily frame wasted from day to day ;²
 Meanwhile, relinquishing all other cares,
 Her mind she strictly tutored to find peace
 And pleasure in endurance. Much she thought,
 And much she read ; and brooded feelingly
 Upon her own unworthiness. To me,
 As to a spiritual comforter and friend,
 Her heart she opened ; and no pains were spared
 To mitigate, as gently as I could,
 The sting of self-reproach, with healing words.

¹ 1827.

She had raised, 1814.

² 1849.

—The bodily frame was wasted day by day ; 1814.

Meek Saint ! through patience glorified on earth !
 In whom, as by her lonely hearth she sate,
 The ghastly face of cold decay put on
 A sun-like beauty, and appeared divine !
 May I not mention—that, within those walls,¹
 In due observance of her pious wish,
 The congregation joined with me in prayer
 For her soul's good ? Nor was that office vain.
 —Much did she suffer : but, if any friend,
 Beholding her condition, at the sight
 Gave way to words of pity or complaint,
 She stilled them with a prompt reproof, and said,
 ' He who afflicts me knows what I can bear ;
 ' And, when I fail, and can endure no more,
 ' Will mercifully take me to himself.'
 So, through the cloud of death, her Spirit passed
 Into that pure and unknown world of love
 Where injury cannot come :—and here is laid
 The mortal Body by her Infant's side."

The Vicar ceased ; and downcast looks made known
 That each had listened with his inmost heart.
 For me, the emotion scarcely was less strong
 Or less benign than that which I had felt
 When seated near my venerable Friend,
 Under² those shady elms, from him I heard
 The story that retraced the slow decline
 Of Margaret, sinking on the lonely heath
 With the neglected house to which she clung.³

¹ 1827.

. within these walls, 1814.

² 1849.

Beneath 1814.

³ 1827.

. in which she dwelt 1814.

—I noted that the Solitary's cheek
 Confessed the power of nature.—Pleased though sad,
 More pleased than sad, the grey-haired Wanderer sate;
 Thanks to his pure imaginative soul
 Capacious and serene; his blameless life,
 His knowledge, wisdom, love of truth, and love
 Of human kind! He was it who first broke
 The pensive silence, saying:—

“Blest are they
 Whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong
 Than to do wrong, albeit themselves have erred.¹
 This tale gives proof that Heaven most gently deals
 With such, in their affliction.—Ellen's fate,
 Her tender spirit, and her contrite heart,
 Call to my mind dark hints which I have heard
 Of one who died within this vale, by doom
 Heavier, as his offence was heavier far.
 Where, Sir, I pray you, where are laid the bones
 Of Wilfred Armathwaite?”

The Vicar answered,
 “In that green nook, close by the Church-yard wall,
 Beneath yon hawthorn, planted by myself
 In memory and for warning, and in sign
 Of sweetness where dire anguish had been known,
 Of reconciliation after deep offence—
 There doth he rest. No theme his fate supplies
 For the smooth glozings of the indulgent world;
 Nor need the windings of his devious course
 Be here retraced;—enough that, by mishap
 And venial error, robbed of competence,
 And her obsequious shadow, peace of mind,
 He craved a substitute in troubled joy;

¹ 1836.

. . . although themselves have erred

1814.

Against his conscience rose in arms, and, braving
Divine displeasure, broke the marriage-vow.¹
That which he had been weak enough to do
Was misery in remembrance ; he was stung,
Stung by his inward thoughts, and by the smiles
Of wife and children stung to agony.
Wretched at home, he gained no peace abroad ;
Ranged through the mountains, slept upon the earth,
Asked comfort of the open air, and found
No quiet in the darkness of the night,
No pleasure in the beauty of the day.
His flock he slighted : his paternal fields

¹ 1827.

There doth he lie.—In this his native Vale
He owned and tilled a little plot of land
Here, with his Consort and his Children, saw
Days—that were seldom crossed by petty strife,
Years—Safe from large misfortune ; and maintained
That course which minds, of insight not too keen,
Might look on with entire complacency.
Yet, in himself and near him, there were faults
At work to undermine his happy state
By sure, though tardy process. Active, prompt,
And lively was the Housewife ; in the Vale
None more industrious ; but her industry
Ill-judged, full oft, and specious, tended more
To splendid neatness ; to a shewy, trim
And overlaboured purity of house ;
Than to substantial thrift. He, on his part
Generous and easy-minded, was not free
From carelessness ; and thus, in lapse of time,
These joint infirmities induced decay
Of worldly substance ; and distress of mind,
That to a thoughtful Man was hard to shun,
And which he could not cure. A blooming Girl
Served in the house, a Favourite that had grown
Beneath his eye, encouraged by his care.
Poor now in tranquil pleasure he gave way
To thoughts of troubled pleasure ; he became
A lawless suitor to the Maid ; and she
Yielded unworthily.—Unhappy Man !

Became a clog to him, whose spirit wished
 To fly—but whither! And this gracious Church,
 That wears a look so full of peace and hope
 And love, benignant mother of the vale,
 How fair amid her brood of cottages!
 She was to him a sickness and reproach.
 Much to the last remained unknown: but this
 Is sure, that through remorse and grief he died;
 Though pitied among men, absolved by God,
 He could not find forgiveness in himself;
 Nor could endure the weight of his own shame.

Here rests a Mother. But from her I turn
 And from her grave.—Behold—upon that ridge,
 That,¹ stretching boldly from the mountain side,
 Carries into the centre of the vale
 Its rocks and woods—the Cottage where she dwelt,
 And where yet dwells her faithful Partner, left
 (Full eight years past) the solitary prop
 Of many helpless Children. I begin
 With words that ² might be prelude to a tale
 Of sorrow and dejection; but I feel
 No sadness, when I think of what mine eyes
 See daily in that happy family.
 —Bright garland form they for the pensive brow
 Of their undrooping Father's widowhood,
 Those six fair Daughters, budding yet—not one,
 Not one of all the band, a full-blown flower.
 Deprest, and desolate of soul, as once
 That Father was, and filled with anxious fear,
 Now, by experience taught, he stands assured

¹ 1827.

Which, 1814.

1827.

With words which 1814.

That God, who takes away, yet takes not half
 Of what he seems to take ; or gives it back,
 Not to our prayer, but far beyond our prayer ;
 He gives it—the boon produce of a soil
 Which our endeavours have refused to till,
 And hope hath never watered. The Abode,
 Whose grateful owner can attest these truths,
 Even were the object nearer to our sight,
 Would seem in no distinction to surpass
 The rudest habitations. Ye might think
 That it had sprung self-raised from earth, or grown
 Out of the living rock, to be adorned
 By nature only ; but, if thither led,
 Ye would discover, then, a studious work
 Of many fancies, prompting many hands.

Brought from the woods the honeysuckle twines
 Around the porch, and seems, in that trim place,
 A plant no longer wild ; the cultured rose
 There blossoms, strong in health, and will be soon
 Roof-high ; the wild pink crowns the garden-wall,
 And with the flowers are intermingled stones
 Sparry and bright, rough scatterings of the hills.¹
 These ornaments, that fade not with the year,
 A hardy Girl continues to provide ;
 Who, mounting fearlessly the rocky heights,
 Her Father's prompt attendant, does for him
 All that a boy could do, but with delight
 More keen and prouder daring ; yet hath she,
 Within the garden, like the rest, a bed
 For her own flowers and favourite herbs, a space,
 By sacred charter, holden for her use.

1827.

the scatterings of the hills.

1814.

—These, and whatever else the garden bears
 Of fruit or flower, permission asked or not,
 I freely gather; and my leisure draws
 A not unfrequent pastime from the hum
 Of bees around their range of sheltered hives
 Busy in that enclosure; while the rill,¹
 That sparkling thrids the rocks, attunes his voice
 To the pure course of human life which there
 Flows on in solitude. But, when the gloom
 Of night is falling round my steps, then most
 This Dwelling charms me; often I stop short,²
 (Who could refrain?) and feed by stealth my sight
 With prospect of the company within,
 Laid open through the blazing window:—there
 I see the eldest Daughter at her wheel
 Spinning amain, as if to overtake
 The never-halting time; or, in her turn,
 Teaching some Novice of the sisterhood
 That skill in this or other household work,
 Which, from her Father's honoured hand, herself,
 While she was yet a little-one, had learned.
 Mild Man! he is not gay, but they are gay;
 And the whole house seems filled with gaiety.
 —Thrice happy, then, the Mother may be deemed,
 The Wife, from whose consolatory grave³

¹ 1849.

. from the sight
 Of the Bees murmuring round their sheltered hives
 In that Enclosure; while the mountain rill, 1814.

² 1827.

Flows on in solitude from year to year.
 —But at the closing in of night, then most
 This Dwelling charms me. Covered by the gloom,
 Then, in my walks, I often times stop short, 1814.

³ 1832.

The Wife, who rests beneath that turf, from which
 1814.

To encourage and reprove, a gleam of light
Broke from the very bosom of that cloud
Which darkened the whole prospect of his days.
For He, who now possessed the joyless right
To force the Bondsman from his house and lands,
In pity, and by admiration urged
Of his un murmuring and considerate mind
Meekly submissive to the law's decree,
Lightened the penalty with liberal hand.
—The desolate Father raised his head, and looked
On the wide world in hope. Within these walls,
In course of time was solemnized the vow
Whereby a virtuous Woman, of grave years
And of prudential habits, undertook
The sacred office of a wife to him,
Of Mother to his helpless family.
—Nor did she fail, in nothing did she fail,
Through various exercise of twice ten years,
Save in some partial fondness for that Child
Which at the birth she had received, the Babe
Whose heart had known no Mother but herself.
—By mutual efforts ; by united hopes ;
By daily-growing help of boy and girl,
Trained early to participate that zeal
Of industry, which runs before the day
And lingers after it ; by strong restraint
Of an economy which did not check
The heart's more generous motions tow'rd's themselves
Or to their neighbours ; and by trust in God ;
This Pair insensibly subdued the fears
And troubles that beset their life : and thus
Did the good Father and his second Mate
Redeem at length their plot of smiling fields.
These, at this day, the eldest Son retains :
The younger Offspring, through the busy world,
Have all been scattered wide, by various fates ;
But each departed from the native Vale,
In beauty flourishing, and moral worth."

Book Seventh.

THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS—*continued.*

ARGUMENT.

Impression of these Narratives upon the Author's mind—Pastor invited to give account of certain Graves that lie apart—Clergyman and his Family—Fortunate influence of change of situation—Activity in extreme old age—Another Clergyman, a character of resolute Virtue—Lamentations over mis-directed applause—Instance of less exalted excellence in a deaf man—Elevated character of a blind man—Reflection upon Blindness—Interrupted by a Peasant who passes—his animal cheerfulness and careless vivacity—He occasions a digression on the fall of beautiful and interesting Trees—A female Infant's Grave—Joy at her birth—Sorrow at her Departure—A youthful Peasant—his patriotic enthusiasm and distinguished qualities—his untimely death—Exultation of the Wanderer, as a patriot, in this Picture—Solitary how affected—Monument of a Knight—Traditions concerning him—Peroration of the Wanderer on the transitoriness of things and the revolutions of society—Hints at his own past Calling—Thanks the Pastor.

WHILE thus from theme to theme the Historian passed,
 The words he uttered, and the scene that lay
 Before our eyes, awakened in my mind
 Vivid remembrance of those long-past hours;
 When, in the hollow of some shadowy vale,
 (What time the splendour of the setting sun
 Lay beautiful on Snowdon's sovereign brow,¹
 On Cader Idris, or huge Penmanmaur)
 A wandering Youth, I listened with delight
 To pastoral melody or warlike air,*
 Drawn from the chords of the ancient British harp
 By some accomplished Master, while he sate

¹ 1827.

Snowdon's craggy top,

1814.

* In the end of May and in June 1791, Wordsworth went with his friend Jones on a pedestrian tour in Wales.—ED.

Amid the quiet of the green recess,
 And there did inexhaustibly dispense
 An interchange of soft or solemn tunes,
 Tender or blithe; now, as the varying mood
 Of his own spirit urged,—now, as a voice
 From youth or maiden, or some honoured chief
 Of his compatriot villagers (that hung
 Around him, drinking in the impassioned notes
 Of the time-hallowed minstrelsy) required
 For their heart's ease or pleasure. Strains of power
 Were they, to seize and occupy the sense;
 But to a higher mark than song can reach
 Rose this pure eloquence. And, when the stream
 Which overflowed the soul was passed away,
 A consciousness remained that it had left,
 Deposited upon the silent shore
 Of memory, images and precious thoughts,
 That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed.

“These grassy heaps lie amicably close,”
 Said I, “like surges heaving in the wind
 Along¹ the surface of a mountain pool:
 Whence comes it, then, that yonder we behold
 Five graves, and only five, that rise together
 Unsociably sequestered, and encroaching²
 On the smooth playground of the village-school?” *

¹ 1836.

Upon 1814.

² 1827.

Five graves, and only five, that lie apart,
 Unsociable company and sad;
 And, furthermore, appearing to encroach, 1814.

* Note the exactness of the reference to the “playground of the village-school.” It is described as “smooth” because it had no graves in it at that time. “The school,” writes Dr Cradock, “was then, and long afterwards,

The Vicar answered,—“No disdainful pride
 In them who rest beneath, nor any course
 Of strange or tragic accident, hath helped
 To place those hillocks in that lonely guise.
 —Once more look forth, and follow with your sight
 The length of road that ¹ from yon mountain's base
 Through bare enclosures stretches, 'till its line
 Is lost within ² a little tuft of trees ; *
 Then, reappearing in a moment, quits
 The cultured fields ; and up the heathy waste,
 Mounts, as you see, in mazes serpentine,
 Led towards ³ an easy outlet of the vale. †
 That little shady spot, that sylvan tuft,
 By which the road is hidden, also hides
 A cottage from our view ; though I discern
 (Ye scarcely can) amid its sheltering trees
 The smokeless chimney-top.—

All unembowered

And naked stood that lowly Parsonage
 (For such in truth it is, and appertains
 To a small Chapel in the vale beyond)
 When hither came its last Inhabitant. ‡

¹ 1827.

.	follow with your eyes	
The length of road which	1814.

² 1827.

Is lost among	1814.
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³ 1836.

Towards	1814.
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held at the house abutting the Lichgate, and the children had no playground but the churchyard. The portion of the ground nearest the school was not used for burial, until the want of room made it necessary to encroach on it. The oldest tombstone bears the date of 1777.”—ED.

* This “tuft of trees” is still standing (1883).—ED.

† This road “up the heathy waste,” and mounting “in mazes serpentine,” is the Keswick road over Dunmail Raise, the “easy outlet of the vale.”—ED.

‡ The cottage in which the parson of Wytheburn then lived still stands on the right or eastern side of the road, as you ascend the Raise, beyond

Rough and forbidding were the choicest roads
 By which our northern wilds could then be crossed ;
 And into most of these secluded vales ¹
 Was no access for wain, heavy or light.
 So, at his dwelling-place the Priest arrived
 With store of household goods, in panniers slung
 On sturdy horses graced with jingling bells,
 And on the back of more ignoble beast ;
 That, with like burthen of effects most prized
 Or easiest carried, closed the motley train.
 Young was I then, a school-boy of eight years ;
 But still, methinks, I see them as they passed
 In order, drawing toward their wished-for home.²
 —Rocked by the motion of a trusty ass
 Two ruddy children hung, a well-poised freight,
 Each in his basket nodding drowsily ;
 Their bonnets, I remember, wreathed with flowers,
 Which told it was ³ the pleasant month of June ;
 And, close behind, the comely Matron rode,
 A woman of soft speech and gracious smile,
 And with a lady's mien.—From far they came,
 Even from Northumbrian hills ; yet theirs had been

¹ 1814-1849.

Be crossed, and into those secluded vales C.

² 1832.

. . . tow'rds their wished-for home. 1814.

³ 1827.

Which told that 'twas . . . 1814.

the Swan Inn. It abuts on the public road about three hundred yards beyond the bridge over Tongue Ghyll beck. "The clergyman and his family described at the beginning of the Seventh Book were, during many years, our principal associates in the vale of Grasmere, unless I were to except our very nearest neighbours. With the single exception of the particulars of their journey to Grasmere (which, however, was exactly copied from real life in another instance), the whole that I have said of them is as faithful to the Truth as words can make it." I. F. MS.—ED.

A merry journey, rich in pastime, cheered
 By music, prank, and laughter-stirring jest;
 And freak put on, and arch word dropped—to swell
 The cloud of fancy and uncouth surmise
 That gathered round the slowly-moving train.
 —‘ Whence do they come? and with what errand charged?
 ‘ Belong they to the fortune-telling tribe
 ‘ Who pitch their tents under the green-wood tree?
 ‘ Or Strollers are they,¹ furnished to enact
 ‘ Fair Rosamond,* and the Children of the Wood,†
 ‘ And, by that whiskered tabby’s aid, set forth
 ‘ The lucky venture of sage Whittington, ‡
 ‘ When the next village hears the show announced
 ‘ By blast of trumpet?’ Plenteous was the growth
 Of such conjectures, overheard, or seen
 On many a staring countenance portrayed
 Of boor or burgher, as they marched along.
 And more than once their steadiness of face
 Was put to proof, and exercise supplied
 To their inventive humour, by stern looks,
 And questions in authoritative tone,
 From some staid guardian of the public peace,
 Checking the sober steed on which he rode,
 In his suspicious wisdom; oftener still,
 By notice indirect, or blunt demand

¹ 1836.

. beneath the green-wood Tree?
 Or are they Strollers,

1814.

* “ Jane Clifford was her name, as books aver;
 Fair Rosamond was but her *nom de guerre*.”

—Dryden, “ Epilogue to Henry II.”

Compare Sir Walter Scott’s *Woodstock* and *The Talisman*.—ED.

† “ Then sad he sung “ The children in the wood.”
 Ah! barbarous uncle, stained with infant blood.”

—Gay, *The Shepherd’s Week*, the Sixth
 Pastoral, line 91.—ED.‡ Compare *The Prelude*, Book VII. (Vol. III., p. 261).—ED.

From traveller halting in his own despite,
 A simple curiosity to ease :
 Of which adventures, that beguiled and cheered
 Their grave migration, the good pair would tell,
 With undiminished glee, in hoary age.

A Priest he was by function ; but his course
 From his youth up, and high as manhood's noon,
 (The hour of life to which he then was brought)
 Had been irregular, I might say, wild ;
 By books unsteadied, by his pastoral care
 Too little checked. An active, ardent mind ;
 A fancy pregnant with resource and scheme
 To cheat the sadness of a rainy day ;
 Hands apt for all ingenious arts and games ;
 A generous spirit, and a body strong
 To cope with stoutest champions of the bowl—
 Had earned for him sure welcome, and the rights
 Of a prized visitant, in the jolly hall
 Of country 'squire ; or at the statelier board
 Of duke or earl, from scenes of courtly pomp
 Withdrawn,—to wile away the summer hours
 In condescension among rural guests.

With these high comrades he had revelled long,
 Frolicked industriously, a simple Clerk
 By hopes of coming patronage beguiled
 Till the heart sickened. So, each loftier aim
 Abandoning and all his showy friends,¹

¹ 1327.

Had frolicked many a year ; a simple Clerk
 By hopes of coming patronage beguiled
 And vexed, until the weary heart grew sick.
 And so, abandoning each higher aim
 And all his shewy Friends, at length he turned

For a life's stay (slender it was, but sure)
 He turned to this secluded chapelry ;
 That¹ had been offered to his doubtful choice
 By an unthought-of patron. Bleak and bare
 They found the cottage, their allotted home ;
 Naked without, and rude within ; a spot
 With which the Cure not long had been endowed :
 And far remote the chapel stood,*—remote,
 And, from his Dwelling, unapproachable,
 Save through a gap high in the hills, an opening
 Shadeless and shelterless, by driving showers
 Frequented, and beset with howling winds.²
 Yet cause was none, whate'er regret might hang
 On his own mind, to quarrel with the choice
 Or the necessity that fixed him here ;
 Apart from old temptations, and constrained
 To punctual labour in his sacred charge.
 See him a constant preacher to the poor !
 And visiting, though not with saintly zeal,
 Yet, when need was, with no reluctant will,
 The sick in body, or distress in mind ;

¹ 1836.

For a life's stay, though slender yet assured,
 To this remote and humble Chapelry ;
 Which 1814.

For a life's stay, though slender, yet assured,
 He turned to this secluded chapelry,
 That 1827.

² 1836.

With which the scantily-provided Cure
 Not long had been endowed : and far remote
 The Chapel stood, divided from that House .
 By an unpeopled tract of mountain waste. 1814.

* The chapel of Wytheburn, at the northern or Cumberland side of Dunmail Raise.—Ed.

And, by a salutary change,¹ compelled²
 To rise from timely sleep, and meet the day
 With no engagement, in his thoughts, more proud
 Or splendid than his garden could afford,
 His fields, or mountains by the heath-cock ranged
 Or the wild brooks;³ from which he now returned
 Contented to partake the quiet meal
 Of his own board,⁴ where sat his gentle Mate
 And three fair Children, plentifully fed
 Though simply, from their little household farm;
 Nor wanted timely treat⁵ of fish or fowl
 By nature yielded to his practised hand;—
 To help the small but certain comings-in
 Of that spare benefice. Yet not the less
 Theirs was a hospitable board, and theirs
 A charitable door.

So days and years
 Passed on;—the inside of that rugged house
 Was trimmed and brightened by the Matron's care,
 And gradually enriched with things of price,
 Which might be lacked for use or ornament.
 What, though no soft and costly sofa there
 Insidiously stretched out its lazy length,
 And no vain mirror glittered upon the walls,⁶

¹ 1849.

And by as salutary 1814.

² 1827.

. compelled,
 Month after month, in that obscure Abode
 To rise 1814.

³ 1827.

Or these wild brooks; 1814.

⁴ 1827.

Contentedly, to take a temperate meal
 At his own board, 1814.

⁵ 1836.

With acceptable treat 1814.

⁶ 1849.

. on the walls, 1814.

Yet were the windows of the low abode
 By shutters weather-fended, which at once
 Repelled the storm and deadened its loud roar.
 There snow-white curtains hung in decent folds ;
 Tough moss, and long enduring mountain plants,
 That creep along the ground with sinuous trail,
 Were nicely braided ; and composed a work
 Like Indian mats, that with appropriate grace
 Lay at the threshold and the inner doors ;
 And a fair carpet, woven of homespun wool
 But tintured daintily with florid hues,
 For seemliness and warmth, on festal days,¹
 Covered the smooth blue slabs of mountain-stone
 With which the parlour floor, in simplest guise
 Of pastoral homesteads, had been long inlaid.*

Those ² pleasing works the Housewife's skill produced :
 Meanwhile the unsedentary Master's hand
 Was busier with his task—to rid, to plant,
 To rear for food, for shelter, and delight ;
 A thriving covert ! And when wishes, formed
 In youth, and sanctioned by the riper mind,
 Restored me to my native valley, here
 To end my days ; well pleased was I to see
 The once-bare cottage, on the mountain side,
 Screen'd from assault of every bitter blast ;

¹ 1827.

. on festive days, 1814.

² 1836.

These 1814.

* This house, in which Mr Sympson lived, and which—though no longer the parsonage—still belongs to Wytheburn church, is easily identified. The “blue slabs of mountain stone,” common to all old houses in the vale, remain just as they were, when the old pastor lived, and Wordsworth was his frequent guest. The windows, too, “by shutters weather-fended,” are described with minute fidelity.—ED.

While the dark shadows of the summer leaves
 Danced in the breeze, chequering its mossy roof.¹
 Time, which had thus afforded willing help
 To beautify with nature's fairest growths²
 This rustic tenement, had gently shed,
 Upon its Master's frame, a wintry grace ;
 The comeliness of unenfeebled age.

But how could I say, gently ? for he still
 Retained a flashing eye, a burning palm,
 A stirring foot, a head³ which beat at nights
 Upon its pillow with a thousand schemes.
 Few likings had he dropped, few pleasures lost ;
 Generous and charitable, prompt to serve ;
 And still his harsher passions kept their hold—
 Anger and indignation. Still he loved
 The sound of titled names, and talked in glee
 Of long-past banquetings with high-born friends :
 Then, from those lulling fits of vain delight
 Uproused by recollected injury, railed
 At their false ways disdainfully,—and oft
 In bitterness, and with a threatening eye
 Of fire, incensed beneath its hoary brow.
 —Those transports,⁴ with staid looks⁵ of pure goodwill,
 And with soft smile, his consort would reprove.
 She, far behind him in the race of years,

¹ 1836.

. upon its mossy roof. 1814.

² 1836.

. growth 1814.

³ 1827.

A stirring foot, and head . . . 1814.

⁴ 1836.

These transports, . . . 1814.

⁵ 1814.

. . . with staid look . . . 1827.

1832 returns to 1814.

Yet keeping her first mildness, was advanced
 Far nearer, in the habit of her soul,
 To that still region whither all are bound,
 Him might we liken to the setting sun
 As seen not seldom ¹ on some gusty day,
 Struggling and bold, and shining from the west
 With an inconstant and unmelior'd light;
 She was a soft attendant cloud, that hung
 As if with wish to veil the restless orb;
 From which it did itself imbibe a ray
 Of pleasing lustre.—But no more of this;
 I better love to sprinkle on the sod
 That ² now divides the pair, or rather say,
 That ³ still unites them, praises, like heaven's dew,
 Without reserve descending upon both.⁴

⁵ Our very first in eminence of years

¹ 1827. As I have seen it, 1814.

² 1827. Which 1814.

³ 1827. Which 1814.

⁴ 1827. Without distinction falling upon both. 1814.

⁵ The following lines occur only in the editions of 1814 and 1820.
 —Yolk-fellows were they long and well approved
 To endure and to perform.

With frugal pains,
 Yet in a course of generous discipline,
 Did this poor Churchman and his Consort rear
 Their progeny.—Of three—sent forth to try
 The paths of fortune in the open world,
 One, not endowed with firmness to resist
 The suit of pleasure, to his native Vale
 Returned, and humbly tilled his Father's glebe.
 —The youngest Daughter, too, in duty stayed
 To lighten her declining Mother's care.
 But, ere the bloom was passed away which health

This old Man stood, the patriarch of the Vale !
 And, to his unmolested mansion, death
 Had never come, through space of forty years ;
 Sparing both old and young in that abode.
 Suddenly then they disappeared : not twice
 Had summer scorched the fields ; not twice had fallen,
 On those high peaks, the first autumnal snow,
 Before the greedy visiting was closed,
 And the long-privileged house left empty—swept
 As by a plague.* Yet no rapacious plague
 Had been among them ; all was gentle death,
 One after one, with intervals of peace.
 A happy consummation ! an accord .
 Sweet, perfect, to be wished for ! save that here
 Was something which to mortal sense might sound
 Like harshness,—that the old grey-headed Sire,
 The oldest, he was taken last ; survived
 When the meek Partner of his age, his Son,
 His Daughter, and that late and high-prized gift,
 His little smiling Grandchild, were no more.

‘ All gone, all vanished ! he deprived and bare,
 ‘ How will he face the remnant of his life ?
 ‘ What will become of him ? ’ we said, and mused
 In sad conjectures—‘ Shall we meet him now
 ‘ Haunting with rod and line the craggy brooks ?

Preserved to adorn a cheek no longer young,
 Her heart, in course of nature, finding place
 For new affections, to the holy state
 Of wedlock they conducted her ; but still
 The Bride adhering to those filial cares
 Dwelt with her Mate beneath her Father's roof.

* Mrs Sympson was twelve years her husband's junior, and she predeceased him by a year and a half.

“ She far behind him in the race of years.”

“ Not twice had summer,” &c.

—ED.

' Or shall we overhear him, as we pass,
 ' Striving to entertain the lonely hours
 ' With music?' (for he had not ceased to touch
 The harp or viol which himself had framed,
 For their sweet purposes, with perfect skill.)
 ' What titles will he keep? will he remain
 ' Musician, gardener, builder, mechanist,
 ' A planter, and a rearer from the seed?
 ' A man of hope and forward-looking mind
 ' Even to the last!'—Such was he, unsubdued.
 But Heaven was gracious; yet a little while,
 And this Survivor, with his cheerful throng
 Of open projects, and his inward hoard¹
 Of unsunned griefs, too many and too keen,
 Was overcome by unexpected sleep,
 In one blest moment. Like a shadow thrown
 Softly and lightly from a passing cloud,
 Death fell upon him, while reclined he lay
 For noontide solace on the summer grass,
 The warm lap of his mother earth: * and so,
 Their lenient term of separation past,
 That family (whose graves you there behold)
 By yet a higher privilege once more
 Were gathered to each other." †

¹ 1836.

Of open schemes, and all his inward hoard

1814.

* Old Mr Sympson was found dead in his garden on the opposite side of the road from the cottage, in 1807, in his ninety-second year. There is now a new door into the garden, but the posts are old enough to have been there in Sympson's time.—Ed.

† The Sympons are all buried at Grasmere. Their gravestone stands about ten yards north-west from that of their poet, not far from the monument erected in memory of Arthur Hugh Clough. There is only one stone, a low one, with a pointed top. The following is the inscription on it:—"Here lie the remains of the Reverend Jos. Sympson, Minister of Wytheburn for more than 50 years. He died June 27, 1807, aged 92; also of Mary, his wife, who died Jan. 24, 1806, aged 81; also of Eliz. Jane their youngest Dr., who died Sep. 11, 1801, aged 37."—Ed.

Calm of mind

And silence waited on these closing words ;
 Until the Wanderer (whether moved by fear
 Lest in those passages of life were some
 That might have touched the sick heart of his Friend
 Too nearly, or intent to reinforce
 His own firm spirit in degree deprest
 By tender sorrow for our mortal state)
 Thus silence broke :—" Behold a thoughtless Man
 From vice and premature decay preserved
 By useful habits, to a fitter soil
 Transplanted ere too late.—The hermit, lodged
 Amid ¹ the untrodden desert, tells his beads,
 With each repeating its allotted prayer,
 And thus divides and thus relieves the time ;
 Smooth task, with *his* compared, whose mind could string,
 Not scantily, bright minutes on the thread
 Of keen domestic anguish ; and beguile
 A solitude, unchosen, unprofessed ;
 Till gentlest death released him.

Far from us

Be the desire—too curiously to ask
 How much of this is but the blind result
 Of cordial spirits and vital temperament,
 And what to higher powers is justly due.
 But you, Sir, know that in a neighbouring vale *
 A Priest abides before whose life such doubts
 Fall to the ground ; whose gifts of nature lie
 Retired from notice, lost in attributes
 Of reason, honourably effaced by debts

¹ 1836

In

1814.

Which her poor treasure-house is content to owe,
 And conquest¹ over her dominion gained,
 To which her frowardness must needs submit.
 In this one Man is shown a temperance—proof
 Against all trials ; industry severe
 And constant as the motion of the day ;
 Stern self-denial round him spread, with shade
 That might be deemed forbidding, did not there
 All generous feelings flourish and rejoice ;
 Forbearance, charity in deed and thought,
 And resolution competent to take
 Out of the bosom of simplicity
 All that her holy customs recommend,
 And the best ages of the world prescribe.
 —Preaching, administering, in every work
 Of his sublime vocation, in the walks
 Of worldly intercourse between man and man,¹
 And in his humble dwelling, he appears
 A labourer, with moral virtue girt,
 With spiritual graces, like a glory, crowned.”

“ Doubt can be none,” the Pastor said, “ for whom
 This portraiture is sketched. The great, the good,
 The well-beloved, the fortunate, the wise,—
 These titles emperors and chiefs have borne,
 Honour assumed or given : and him, the WONDERFUL,
 Our simple shepherds, speaking from the heart,
 Deservedly have styled.*—From his abode
 In a dependent chapelry that lies

¹ 1829.

And conquests 1814, and in 1830.

² 1836.

. 'twixt man and man, . . . 1814.

* See the notes to the Duddon sonnets.—ED.

Behind yon hill, a poor and rugged wild,*
 Which in his soul he lovingly embraced,
 And, having once espoused, would never quit;
 Into its graveyard will ere long be borne
 That lowly, great, good Man. A simple stone¹
 May cover him;† and by its help, perchance,
 A century shall hear his name pronounced,
 With images attendant on the sound;
 Then, shall the slowly-gathering twilight close
 In utter night; and of his course remain
 No cognizable vestiges, no more
 Than of this breath, which shapes itself in words²
 To speak of him, and instantly dissolves.”

The Pastor pressed by thoughts which round his theme
 Still linger'd, after a brief pause, resumed;
 “Noise³ is there not enough in doleful war,
 But that the heaven-born poet must stand forth,
 And lend the echoes of his sacred shell,

¹ 1840.

., would never quit;
 Hither, ere long, that lowly, great, good Man
 Will be conveyed. An unelaborate Stone . . . 1814.
 Into its graveyard will ere long be borne
 That lowly great good man. A simple stone
 May cover him, and by that record's help, . . . C.

² 1827.

. which frames itself in words. . . . 1814.

³ 1840.

., and instantly dissolves.
 —Noise 1814.

* The chapelry of Seathwaite. The reference to “yon hill” suggests that the conversation is carried on at Hackett (rather than Grasmere), whence Wetherham—which concealed the Duddon Valley—would be visible.—ED.

† It is so. In the churchyard of Seathwaite a plain stone slab records the fact that he died on the 25th June 1802, in the ninety-third year of his age.—ED.

To multiply and aggravate the din ?
 Pangs are there not enough in hopeless love—
 And, in requited passion, all too much
 Of turbulence, anxiety, and fear—
 But that the minstrel of the rural shade
 Must tune his pipe, insidiously to nurse
 The perturbation in the suffering breast,
 And propagate its kind, far as he may ?¹
 —Ah who (and with such rapture as befits
 The hallowed theme) will rise and celebrate
 The good man's purposes and deeds ; retrace²
 His struggles, his discomfitures deplore,³
 His triumphs hail, and glorify his end ;
 That virtue, like the fumes and vapoury clouds
 Through fancy's heat redounding in the brain,
 And like the soft infections of the heart,
 By charm of measured words may spread o'er field,
 Hamlet, and town ;⁴ and piety survive
 Upon the lips of men in hall or bower ;
 Not for reproof, but high and warm delight,
 And grave encouragement, by song inspired ?
 —Vain thought ! but wherefore murmur or repine ?
 The memory of the just survives in heaven :
 And, without sorrow, will the ground receive⁵
 That venerable clay. Meanwhile the best

¹ 1832.

. , where'er he may ?

1814.

² 1836.

The good Man's deeds and purposes ; retrace

1814.

³ 1836.

. his discomfiture deplore,

1814.

⁴ 1827.

. through fields

And cottages,

1814.

⁵ 1840,

. will this ground receive

1814.

Of what lies here¹ confines us to degrees
 In excellence less difficult to reach,
 And milder worth: nor need we travel far
 From those to whom our last regards were paid,
 For such example.

Almost at the root

Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare
 And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
 Oft stretches towards me,² like a long straight path
 Traced faintly in the greensward; there, beneath
 A plain blue stone, a gentle Dalesman lies,
 From whom, in early childhood, was withdrawn
 The precious gift of hearing.* He grew up
 From year to year in loneliness of soul;
 And this deep mountain-valley was to him
 Soundless, with all its streams.† The bird of dawn
 Did never rouse this Cottager from sleep
 With startling summons; not for his delight
 The vernal cuckoo shouted; not for him
 Murmured the labouring bee. When stormy winds

¹ 1849.

Of what it holds 1814.

² 1836.

Oft stretches tow'rds me, 1814.

* "The deaf man, whose epitaph may be seen in the churchyard at the head of Hawes-Water, and whose qualities of mind and heart, and their benign influence in conjunction with his privation, I had from his relations on the spot."—I. F. MS.

From this it is clear that we must not look for the "tall pine" or the "plain blue stone" in Grasmere churchyard! and that the localities as well as the narratives of *The Excursion* are at times composite.—Ed.

† For another reference to the streams in the Grasmere Vale, compare the *Lines* on the expected death of Mr Fox, Vol. IV. p. 42—

"Loud is the Vale, the Voice is up
 With which she speaks when storms are gone,
 A mighty unison of streams!
 Of all her Voices, One."

—Ed.

Were working the broad bosom of the lake
Into a thousand thousand sparkling waves,
Rocking the trees, or driving cloud on cloud
Along the sharp edge of yon lofty crags,*
The agitated scene before his eye
Was silent as a picture : evermore
Were all things silent, wheresoe'er he moved.
Yet, by the solace of his own pure thoughts
Upheld, he duteously pursued the round
Of rural labours ; the steep mountain-side
Ascended, with his staff and faithful dog ;
The plough he guided, and the scythe he swayed ;
And the ripe corn before his sickle fell
Among the jocund reapers. For himself,
All watchful and industrious as he was,
He wrought not : neither field nor flock he owned :
No wish for wealth had place within his mind ;
Nor husband's love, nor father's hope or care.

Though born a younger brother, need was none
That from the floor of his paternal home
He should depart, to plant himself anew.
And when, mature in manhood, he beheld
His parents laid in earth, no loss ensued
Of rights to him ; but he remained well pleased,
By the pure bond of independent love,
An inmate of a second family ;
The fellow-labourer and friend of him
To whom the small inheritance had fallen.
—Nor deem that his mild presence was a weight

* Either Stone Arthur, or Loughrigg. Compare the lines *To the Clouds*, suggested by their appearance on Nab Scar—

“ Army of clouds ! ye winged Host, in troops
Ascending from behind the motionless brow
Of that tall rock,” &c.

That pressed upon his brother's house ; for books
 Were ready comrades whom he could not tire ;
 Of whose society the blameless Man
 Was never satiate. Their familiar voice,
 Even to old age, with unabated charm
 Beguiled his leisure hours ; refreshed his thoughts ;
 Beyond its natural elevation raised
 His introverted spirit ; and bestowed
 Upon his life an outward dignity
 Which all acknowledged. The dark winter night,
 The stormy day, each had its own resource ;¹
 Song of the muses, sage historic tale,
 Science severe, or word of holy Writ
 Announcing immortality and joy
 To the assembled spirits of just men
 Made perfect, and from injury secure.²
 —Thus soothed at home, thus busy in the field,
 To no perverse suspicion he gave way,
 No languor, peevishness, nor vain complaint :
 And they, who were about him, did not fail
 In reverence, or in courtesy ; they prized
 His gentle manners : and his peaceful smiles,
 The gleams of his slow-varying countenance,
 Were met with answering sympathy and love.

At length, when sixty years and five were told,
 A slow disease insensibly consumed
 The powers of nature : and a few short steps
 Of friends and kindred bore him from his home
 (Yon cottage shaded by the woody crags)

¹ 1836.

. . . , had each its own resource ;

1814.

² 1836.To the assembled spirits of the just
 From imperfection and decay secure.

1814.

To the profounder stillness of the grave.
 —Nor was his funeral denied the grace
 Of many tears, virtuous and thoughtful grief;
 Heart-sorrow rendered sweet by gratitude.
 And now that monumental stone preserves
 His name, and unambitiously relates
 How long, and by what kindly outward aids,
 And in what pure contentedness of mind,
 The sad privation was by him endured.
 —And yon tall pine-tree, whose composing sound
 Was wasted on the good Man's living ear,
 Hath now its own peculiar sanctity;
 And, at the touch of every wandering breeze,
 Murmurs, not idly, o'er his peaceful grave.

Soul-cheering Light, most bountiful of things!
 Guide of our way, mysterious comforter!
 Whose sacred influence, spread through earth and heaven,
 We all too thanklessly participate,
 Thy gifts were utterly withheld from him
 Whose place of rest is near yon ivied porch.*
 Yet, of the wild brooks ask if he complained;
 Ask of the channelled rivers if they held
 A safer, easier, more determined, course.
 What terror doth it strike into the mind
 To think of one, blind and alone, advancing
 Straight toward some precipice's airy brink!¹

¹ 1849.

To think of One, who cannot see, advancing
 Towards some precipice's airy brink!

1814.

Toward

1832.

To think of one, who cannot see, advancing
 Straight toward some precipice's airy brink!

1836.

* "The blind man was John Gough of Kendal, a man known far beyond his neighbourhood for his talents and attainments in natural history and science."—I. F. MS.—ED.

But, timely warned, *He* would have stayed his steps,
 Protected, say enlightened, by his ear;
 And on the very edge of vacancy¹
 Not more endangered than a man whose eye
 Beholds the gulf beneath. — No floweret blooms
 Throughout the lofty range of these rough hills,
 Nor² in the woods, that could from him conceal
 Its birth-place; none whose figure did not live
 Upon his touch.* The bowels of the earth
 Enriched with knowledge his industrious mind;
 The ocean paid him tribute from the stores
 Lodged in her bosom; and, by science led,
 His genius mounted to the plains of heaven.
 —Methinks I see him—how his eye-balls rolled,
 Beneath his ample brow, in darkness paired,—
 But each instinct with spirit; and the frame
 Of the whole countenance alive with thought,

¹ 1827.

. brink of vacancy

1814.

² 1836.

Or

1814.

* This John Gough, a friend of Wordsworth's, was one of the first mathematicians of his time, and a most successful teacher. Whewell and King (senior wranglers) were amongst his pupils. So was Dalton. Gough had been deprived of sight by an attack of small-pox, when he was between two and three years of age. He was a great botanist, as is mentioned in the text; and the following remarkable circumstance is recorded of him, showing at once his marvellous memory, and the extreme delicacy of his sense of touch. In the *Elegiac Verses* on his brother John, Wordsworth had described the moss campion, *Silene acaulis*—

“ It grows upon its native bed
 Beside our parting place;
 There, cleaving to the ground, it lies
 With multitude of purple eyes,
 Spangling a cushion green like moss.”

This poem was read to Gough in 1805 (it was not published till 1845), and twelve years afterwards, in 1817, a specimen of the moss campion was placed in his hand, and he said at once, “I have never examined this plant before, but it is *Silene acaulis*.” Compare Atkinson's *Worthies of Cumberland*, and note G in the Appendix to this volume.—ED.

Fancy, and understanding ; while the voice
Discoursed of natural or moral truth¹
With eloquence, and such authentic power,
That, in his presence, humbler knowledge stood
Abashed, and tender pity overawed.”*

“ A noble—and, to unreflecting minds,
A marvellous spectacle,” the Wanderer said,
“ Beings like these present ! But proof abounds
Upon the earth that faculties, which seem
Extinguished, do not, *therefore*, cease to be.
And to the mind among her powers of sense
This transfer is permitted,—not alone
That the bereft their recompense may win ;²
But for remoter purposes of love
And charity ; nor last nor least for this,
That to the imagination may be given
A type and shadow of an awful truth ;³
How, likewise, under sufferance divine,
Darkness is banished from the realms of death,
By man’s imperishable spirit, quelled.
Unto the men who see not as we see
Futurity was thought, in ancient times,
To be laid open, and they prophesied.
And know we not that from the blind have flowed
The highest, holiest, raptures of the lyre ;
And wisdom married to immortal verse ? ” †

¹ 1827.

. and moral truth 1814.

² 1827.

. may win their recompense ; 1814.

³ 1814-1849.Not least for this that here might be perceived
A type and shadow of that awful truth. C.

* See note on previous page.—Ed.

† Compare Milton, *L' Allegro*, l. 137—

“ Married to immortal verse.”

—Ed.

Among the humbler Worthies, at our feet
Lying insensible to human praise,
Love, or regret,—*whose* lineaments would next
Have been portrayed, I guess not ; but it chanced
That, near the quiet church-yard where we sate,
A team of horses, with a ponderous freight
Pressing behind, adown a rugged slope,
Whose sharp descent confounded their array,
Came at that moment, ringing noisily.

“ Here,” said the Pastor, “ do we muse, and mourn
The waste of death ; and lo ! the giant oak
Stretched on his bier—that massy timber wain ;
Nor fail to note the Man who guides the team.”

He was a peasant of the lowest class :
Grey locks profusely round his temples hung
In clustering curls, like ivy, which the bite
Of winter cannot thin ; the fresh air lodged
Within his cheek, as light within a cloud ;
And he returned our greeting with a smile.
When he had passed, the Solitary spake ;
“ A Man he seems of cheerful yesterdays
And confident to-morrows ; with a face
Not worldly-minded, for it bears too much
Of Nature’s impress,—gaiety and health,
Freedom and hope ; but keen, withal, and shrewd.
His gestures note,—and hark ! his tones of voice
Are all vivacious as his mien and looks.”

The Pastor answered. “ You have read him well.
Year after year is added to his store
With *silent* increase : summers, winters—past,
Past or to come ; yea, boldly might I say,

Ten summers and ten winters of a space¹
 That lies beyond life's ordinary bounds,
 Upon his sprightly vigour cannot fix
 The obligation of an anxious mind,
 A pride in having, or a fear to lose ;
 Possessed like outskirts of some large domain,
 By any one more thought of than by him
 Who holds the land in fee, its careless lord !
 Yet is the creature rational, endowed
 With foresight ; hears, too, every sabbath day,
 The christian promise with attentive ear ;
 Nor will, I trust, the Majesty of Heaven
 Reject the incense offered up by him,
 Though of the kind which beasts and birds present²
 In grove or pasture ; cheerfulness of soul,
 From trepidation and repining free.
 How many scrupulous worshippers fall down
 Upon their knees, and daily homage pay
 Less worthy, less religious even, than his !

This qualified respect, the old Man's due,
 Is paid without reluctance ; but in truth,"
 (Said the good Vicar with a fond half-smile)
 "I feel at times a motion of despite
 Towards one, whose bold contrivances and skill,
 As you have seen, bear such conspicuous part
 In works of havock ; taking from these vales,
 One after one, their proudest ornaments.

¹ 1827.

of the space

1814.

² 1827.

with attentive ear,

Nor disbelieves the tidings which he hears.

Meanwhile the incense offered up by him

Is of the kind which beasts and birds present

1814.

Full oft his doings leave me to deplore
 Tall ash-tree, sown by winds, by vapours nursed,
 In the dry crannies of the pendent rocks ;
 Light birch, aloft upon the horizon's edge,
 A veil¹ of glory for the ascending moon ;
 And oak whose roots by noontide dew were damped,
 And on whose forehead inaccessible
 The raven lodged in safety.—Many a ship
 Launched into Morecamb-bay to *him* hath owed²
 Her strong knee-timbers, and the mast that bears
 The loftiest of her pendants ; He, from park
 Or forest, fetched the enormous axle-tree
 That whirls (how slow itself !) ten thousand spindles :³
 And the vast engine labouring in the mine,
 Content with meaner prowess, must have lacked
 The trunk and body of its marvellous strength,⁴
 If his undaunted enterprise had failed
 Among the mountain coves.

Yon household fir,⁵

A guardian planted to fence off the blast,
 But towering high the roof above, as if

¹ 1827.

. horizon's edge,
 Transparent texture, framing in the east
 A veil 1814.

² 1827.

. , hath owed to him 1814.

³ 1827.

The loftiest of her pendants. Help he gives
 To lordly mansion rising far or near ;
 The enormous wheel that turns ten thousand
 spindles, 1814.

⁴ 1827.

. . . of their marvellous strength, 1814.

⁵ 1827.

Among the mountain coves, or keen research .
 In forest, park, or chace. Yon household Fir, 1814.

Its humble destination were forgot—
 That sycamore, which annually holds
 Within its shade, as in a stately tent *
 On all sides open to the fanning breeze,
 A grave assemblage, seated while they shear
 The fleece-encumbered flock—the JOYFUL ELM,
 Around whose trunk the maidens dance in May—¹
 And the LORD'S OAK—would plead their several rights
 In vain, if he were master of their fate ;
 His sentence ² to the axe would doom them all.
 But, green in age and lusty as he is,
 And promising to keep his hold on earth ³
 Less, as might seem, in rivalry with men
 Than with the forest's more enduring growth,
 His own appointed hour will come at last ;
 And, like the haughty Spoilers of the world,
 This keen Destroyer, in his turn, must fall.

Now from the living pass we once again :
 From Age," the Priest continued, " turn your thoughts ;
 From Age, that often unlamented drops,
 And mark that daisied hillock, three spans long !
 —Seven lusty Sons sate daily round the board

¹ 1827. . . . the lasses dance in May ;— 1814.

² 1827. . . . of their fate.
 Not one would have his pitiful regard,
 For prized accommodation, pleasant use,
 For dignity, for old acquaintance sake,
 For ancient custom or distinguished name.
 His sentence 1814.

³ 1827. And promising to stand from year to year, 1814.

Of Gold-rill * side ; and, when the hope had ceased
 Of other progeny, a Daughter then
 Was given, the crowning bounty of the whole ;
 And so acknowledged with a tremulous joy
 Felt to the centre of that heavenly calm ¹
 With which by nature every mother's soul
 Is stricken in the moment when her throes
 Are ended, and her ears have heard the cry
 Which tells her that a living child is born ;
 And she lies conscious, in a blissful rest,
 That the dread storm is weathered by them both.

The Father—him at this unlooked-for gift
 A bolder transport seizes. From the side
 Of his bright hearth, and from his open door,

¹ 1827.

Was given, the crown and glory of the whole !
 Welcomed with joy, whose penetrating power
 Was not unfelt amid that heavenly calm

1814.

* “ This refers to the Greens, a very ancient Grasmere family, settled for generations at Pavement End, which, with a considerable tract of land, is still their property. The poet describes them as dwelling at Gold-rill side, and I have been told that the name was a pure invention to avoid the realism of ‘Grasmere,’ or ‘Pavement End.’ Such, however, is not exactly the case. On enquiry from Mr Fleming Green, one of the family now residing in Grasmere, I find that a small stream to which Wordsworth himself, from some fancy of his own, had given the name of Gold-rill, ran formerly by the road side, and then turned by the side of the farm at Pavement End towards the Lake. When the road was reconstructed, the rill was covered, and can no more be seen there ; but it issues freely from a culvert at the back of the premises, and runs by the hedge-side to the Lake. Mr Fleming Green remembers the rill as it was, and pointed out its course to me. He is a son of one of the ‘seven lusty sons’ mentioned in the poem. (Mr Green would read ‘six.’) He said ‘we stuck to the old home till we could no longer stand up in it.’ He is one of a race well termed ‘lusty.’ The ‘hoary grandsire’ and many of his descendants lie buried in a long row, a little to the left of the path leading from the Church to the lichgate at the north. Among them is little Margaret (her name and age not unrecorded), but her ‘daisied hillock three spans long’ is now merged in the larger graves of her more aged kindred.”—(Dr Cradock to the Editor.)—ED.

Day after day ¹ the gladness is diffused
 To all that come, almost to all that pass ; ²
 Invited, summoned, to partake the cheer
 Spread on the never-empty board, and drink
 Health and good wishes to his new-born girl,
 From cups replenished by his joyous hand.
 —Those seven fair brothers variously were moved
 Each by the thoughts best suited to his years :
 But most of all and with most thankful mind
 The hoary grandsire felt himself enriched ;
 A happiness that ebbed not, but remained
 To fill the total measure of his soul ! ³
 —From the low tenement, his own abode,
 Whither, as to a little private cell,
 He had withdrawn from bustle, care, and noise,
 To spend the sabbath of old age in peace,
 Once every day he duteously repaired
 To rock the cradle of the slumbering babe :
 For in that female infant's name he heard
 The silent name of his departed wife ;
 Heart-stirring music ! hourly heard that name ;
 Full blest he was, ' Another Margaret Green,'
 Oft did he say, ' was come to Gold-rill side.'

Oh ! pang unthought of, as the precious boon
 Itself had been unlooked-for ; oh ! dire stroke
 Of desolating anguish for them all !

¹ 1827.

. from his open door,
 And from the laurel-shaded seat thereby,
 Day after day

1814.

² 1836.

. and almost all that pass ;

1814.

³ 1836.

. of the soul !

1814.

—Just as the Child could totter on the floor,
 And, by some friendly finger's help upstayed,
 Range round the garden walk, while she perchance
 Was catching at some novelty of spring,
 Ground-flower, or glossy insect from its cell
 Drawn by the sunshine—at that hopeful season
 The winds of March, smiting insidiously,¹
 Raised in the tender passage of the throat
 Viewless obstruction ; whence, all unforewarned,
 The household lost their pride and soul's delight.
 —But time hath power² to soften all regrets,
 And prayer and thought can bring to worst distress
 Due resignation. Therefore, though some tears
 Fail not to spring from either Parent's eye
 Oft as they hear of sorrow like their own,
 Yet this departed Little-one, too long
 The innocent troubler of their quiet, sleeps
 In what may now be called a peaceful bed.*

On a bright day—so calm and bright it seemed
 To us, with our sad spirits, heavenly fair—
 These mountains echoed to an unknown sound ;³

¹ 1827.

Range round the garden-walk, whose low ground-
 flowers

Were weeping forth, shy messengers of spring,—
 Even at that hopeful time,—the winds of March,
 One sunny day, smiting insidiously,

1814.

² 1827.

. their hope and soul's delight.
 —But Providence, that gives and takes away
 By his own law is merciful and just ;
 Time wants not power

1814.

³ 1836.

. a peaceful grave.

On a bright day, the brightest of the year,
 These mountains echoed with an unknown sound, 1814.

* “Of the infant's grave I will only say it is an exact picture of what
 fell under my own observation.”—I. F. MS.—ED.

A volley, thrice repeated o'er the Corse
 Let down into the hollow of that grave,
 Whose shelving sides are red with naked mould.
 Ye rains of April, duly wet this earth !
 Spare, burning sun of midsummer, these sods,
 That they may knit together, and therewith
 Our thoughts unite in kindred quietness !
 Nor so the Valley shall forget her loss.
 Dear Youth, by young and old alike beloved,*
 To me as precious as my own !—Green herbs
 May creep (I wish that they would softly creep)
 Over thy last abode, and we may pass
 Reminded less imperiously of thee ;—
 The ridge itself may sink into the breast
 Of earth, the great abyss, and be no more ;
 Yet shall not thy remembrance leave our hearts,
 Thy image disappear !

The Mountain-ash

No eye can overlook, when 'mid a grove
 Of yet unfaded trees she lifts her head
 Decked¹ with autumnal berries, that outshine
 Spring's richest blossoms ; and ye may have marked,²
 By a brook-side or solitary tarn,

¹ 1827.

.	The mountain Ash,
Decked	1814.

² 1827.

Spring's richest blossoms, yields a splendid show, Amid the leafy woods ; and ye have seen,	1814.
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* "This young volunteer bore the name of Dawson. . . . The premature death of this gallant young man was much lamented, and as an attendant upon the funeral, I myself witnessed the ceremony, and the effect of it as described in the poem."—I. F. M.S. See the whole of the note (p. 11).—ED.

How she her station doth adorn : the pool
 Glows at her feet, and all the gloomy rocks
 Are brightened round her. In his native vale
 Such and so glorious did this Youth appear ;
 A sight that kindled pleasure in all hearts
 By his ingenuous beauty, by the gleam
 Of his fair eyes, by his capacious brow,
 By all the graces with which nature's hand
 Had lavishly¹ arrayed him. As old bards
 Tell in their idle songs of wandering gods,
 Pan or Apollo, veiled in human form :
 Yet, like the sweet-breathed violet of the shade
 Discovered in their own despite to sense
 Of mortals (if such fables without blame
 May find chance-mention on this sacred ground)
 So, through a simple rustic garb's disguise,
 And through the impediment of rural cares,
 In him revealed a scholar's genius shone ;
 And so, not wholly hidden from men's sight,
 In him the spirit of a hero walked
 Our unpretending valley.—How the quoit
 Whizzed from the stripling's arm ! If touched by him,
 The inglorious foot-ball mounted to the pitch
 Of the lark's flight,—or shaped a rainbow curve,
 Aloft, in prospect of the shouting field !
 The indefatigable fox had learned
 To dread his perseverance in the chase.²

¹ 1827.

Had bounteously

1814.

² 1814-1849.Fleeing for life the fox was taught to dread
 His voice and indefatigable feet.

c.

Or,

The fox in many wiles however versed

And graced with shining weapons, weekly marched,
 From this lone valley, to a central spot
 Where, in assemblage with the flower and choice
 Of the surrounding district, they might learn
 The rudiments of war; ten—hardy, strong,
 And valiant; but young Oswald, like a chief
 And yet a modest comrade, led them forth
 From their shy solitude, to face the world,
 With a gay confidence and seemly pride;
 Measuring the soil beneath their happy feet
 Like Youths released from labour, and yet bound
 To most laborious service, though to them
 A festival of unencumbered ease;
 The inner spirit keeping holiday,
 Like vernal ground to sabbath sunshine left.

Oft have I marked him, at some leisure hour,
 Stretched on the grass, or seated in the shade,
 Among his fellows, while an ample map
 Before their eyes lay carefully outspread,
 From which the gallant teacher would discourse,
 Now pointing this way, and now that.—‘Here flows,’
 Thus would he say, ‘The Rhine, that famous stream!
 ‘Eastward, the Danube toward this inland sea,¹
 ‘A mightier river, winds from realm to realm;
 ‘And, like a serpent, shows his glittering back
 ‘Bespotted—with innumerable isles:
 ‘Here reigns the Russian, there the Turk; observe
 ‘His capital city!’ Thence, along a tract
 Of livelier interest to his hopes and fears,
 His finger moved, distinguishing the spots
 Where wide-spread conflict then most fiercely raged;

¹ 1827.

tow'rds this inland sea,

1814.

Nor left unstigmatized those fatal fields
 On which the sons of mighty Germany
 Were taught a base submission.—‘ Here behold
 ‘ A nobler race, the Switzers, and their land,
 ‘ Vales deeper far than these of ours, huge woods,
 ‘ And mountains white with everlasting snow !’
 —And, surely, he, that spake with kindling brow,
 Was a true patriot, hopeful as the best
 Of that young peasantry, who, in our days,
 Have fought and perished for Helvetia’s rights—
 Ah, not in vain !—or those who, in old time,
 For work of happier issue, to the side
 Of Tell came trooping from a thousand huts,
 When he had risen alone ! No braver Youth
 Descended from Judean heights,¹ to march
 With righteous Joshua ;* nor appeared in arms²
 When grove was felled, and altar was cast down,
 And Gideon blew the trumpet, soul-inflamed,
 And, strong in hatred of idolatry.”

The Pastor, even as if by these last words
 Raised from his seat within the chosen shade,
 Moved toward the grave ;—instinctively his steps
 We followed ; and my voice with joy exclaimed :³
 “ Power to the Oppressors of the world is given,
 A might of which they dream not. Oh ! the curse,

¹ 1827.

Descended from Judea’s heights . . . 1814.

² 1836.

. . . ; or appeared in arms 1814.

³ 1836.

This spoken, from his seat the Pastor rose,
 And moved towards the grave ;—instinctively
 His steps we followed ; and my voice exclaimed, 1814.

* Compare the Book of *Joshua*, *passim* ; Josephus, Ant. V. 1. Also, *Judges* VII. ; and Josephus, Ant. V. 6.—Ed.

To be the awakener of divinest thoughts,
 Father and founder of exalted deeds ;
 And, to whole nations bound in servile straits,
 The liberal donor of capacities
 More than heroic ! this to be, nor yet
 Have sense of one connatural wish, nor yet
 Deserve the least return of human thanks ;
 Winning no recompense but deadly hate
 With pity mixed, astonishment with scorn !”

When this involuntary strain had ceased, ¹
 The Pastor said : “ So Providence is served ;
 The forked weapon of the skies can send
 Illumination into deep, dark holds,
 Which the mild sunbeam hath not power to pierce.
 Ye Thrones that have defied remorse, and cast
 Pity away, soon shall ye quake with *fear* ! ²
 For, not unconscious of the mighty debt
 Which to outrageous wrong the sufferer owes,
 Europe, through all her habitable bounds, ³
 Is thirsting for *their* overthrow, who yet
 Survive, as pagan temples stood of yore,
 By horror of their impious rites, preserved ;
 Are still permitted to extend their pride, ⁴

¹ 1836.

When these involuntary words had ceased,

1814.

² 1836.. power to pierce.
 Why do ye quake, intimidated Thrones ?

1814.

³ 1836.

. habitable Seats,

1814.

⁴ 1836.. who still
 Exist, as Pagan-Temples stood of old,
 By very horror of their impious rites
 Preserved ; are suffered to extend their pride,

1814.

Like cedars on the top of Lebanon
Darkening the sun.

But less impatient thoughts,
And love 'all hoping and expecting all,'
This hallowed grave demands, where rests in peace
A humble champion of the better cause ;
A Peasant-youth, so call him, for he asked
No higher name ; in whom our country showed,
As in a favourite son, most beautiful.
In spite of vice, and misery, and disease,
Spread with the spreading of her wealthy arts,
England, the ancient and the free, appeared
In him to stand before my swimming eyes,
Unconquerably virtuous and secure.
—No more of this, lest I offend his dust :
Short was his life, and a brief tale remains.

One day—a summer's day of annual pomp¹
And solemn chase—from morn to sultry noon
His steps had followed, fleetest of the fleet,
The red-deer driven along its native heights
With cry of hound and horn ; and, from that toil
Returned with sinews weakened and relaxed,
This generous Youth, too negligent of self,
Plunged—'mid a gay and busy throng convened
To wash the fleeces of his Father's flock—
Into the chilling flood. Convulsions dire²

¹ 1849.

One summer's day, a day of annual pomp

1814.

² 1827.

. , too negligent of self,
(A natural failing which maturer years
Would have subdued) took fearlessly—and kept—
His wonted station in the chilling flood,
Among a busy company convened
To wash his Father's flock. Convulsions dire

1814.

Seized him, that self-same night ; and through the space
Of twelve ensuing days his frame was wrenched,
Till nature rested from her work in death.
To him, thus snatched away, his comrades paid
A soldier's honours. At his funeral hour
Bright was the sun, the sky a cloudless blue—
A golden lustre slept upon the hills ;
And if by chance a stranger, wandering there,
From some commanding eminence had looked
Down on this spot, well pleased would he have seen
A glittering spectacle ; but every face
Was pallid : seldom hath that eye been moist
With tears, that wept not then ; nor were the few,
Who from their dwellings came not forth to join
In this sad service, less disturbed than we.
They started at the tributary peal
Of instantaneous thunder, which announced,
Through the still air, the closing of the Grave ;
And distant mountains echoed with a sound
Of lamentation, never heard before ! ”

The Pastor ceased.—My venerable Friend
Victoriously upraised his clear bright eye ;
And, when that eulogy was ended, stood
Enrapt, as if his inward sense perceived
The prolongation of some still response,
Sent by the ancient Soul of this wide land,
The Spirit of its mountains and its seas,
Its cities, temples, fields, its awful power,
Its rights and virtues—by that Deity
Descending, and supporting his pure heart
With patriotic confidence and joy.
And, at the last of those memorial words,
The pining Solitary turned aside ;

Whether through manly instinct to conceal
 Tender emotions spreading from the heart,
 To his worn cheek ; or with uneasy shame
 For those cold humours of habitual spleen
 That,¹ fondly seeking in dispraise of man
 Solace and self-excuse, had sometimes urged
 To self-abuse a not ineloquent tongue.

—Right toward ² the sacred Edifice his steps
 Had been directed ; and we saw him now
 Intent upon a monumental stone,
 Whose uncouth form was grafted on the wall,
 Or rather seemed to have grown into the side
 Of the rude pile ; as oft-times trunks of trees,
 Where nature works in wild and craggy spots,
 Are seen incorporate with the living rock—
 To endure for aye. The Vicar, taking note
 Of his employment, with a courteous smile
 Exclaimed—

“The sagest Antiquarian’s eye
 That task would foil ;” then, letting fall his voice
 While he advanced, thus spake ; “Tradition tells ³
 That, in Eliza’s golden days, a Knight,
 Came on a war-horse * sumptuously attired,
 And fixed his home in this sequestered vale.
 ’Tis left untold if here he first drew breath,
 Or as a stranger reached this deep recess,

* ¹ 1827. Which, 1814.

² 1827. —Right tow’rds 1814.

³ 1827. That task would foil.” And, with these added
 words,
 He hitherward advanced, “Tradition tells 1814.

Unknowing and unknown. A pleasing thought
 I sometimes entertain, that, haply bound
 To Scotland's court in service of his Queen,
 Or sent on mission to some northern Chief
 Of England's realm, this vale he might have seen
 With transient observation; and thence caught
 An image fair, which, brightening in his soul
 When joy of war and pride of chivalry
 Languished beneath accumulated years,¹
 Had power to draw him from the world, resolved
 To make that paradise his chosen home
 To which his peaceful fancy oft had turned.

Vague thoughts are these; but, if belief may rest
 Upon unwritten story fondly traced
 From sire to son, in this obscure retreat
 The Knight arrived, with spear and shield, and borne
 Upon a Charger gorgeously bedecked
 With broidered housings.² And the lofty Steed—
 His sole companion, and his faithful friend,
 Whom he, in gratitude, let loose to range
 In fertile pastures—was beheld with eyes
 Of admiration and delightful awe,
 By those untravelled Dalesmen. With less pride,
 Yet free from touch of envious discontent,
 They saw a mansion at his bidding rise,
 Like a bright star, amid the lowly band
 Of their rude homesteads. Here the Warrior dwelt;

¹ 1827.

. in his soul
 When years admonished him of failing strength
 And he no more rejoiced in war's delights, 1814.

² 1849.

The Knight arrived, with pomp of spear and shield,
 And borne upon a Charger covered o'er
 With gilded housings. 1814.

And, in that mansion, children of his own,
Or kindred, gathered round him. As a tree
That falls and disappears, the house is gone ; *
And, through improvidence or want of love
For ancient worth and honourable things,
The spear and shield are vanished, which the Knight
Hung in his rustic hall. One ivied arch
Myself have seen, a gateway,* last remains
Of that foundation in domestic care
Raised by his hands. And now no trace is left
Of the mild-hearted Champion, save this stone,
Faithless memorial ! and his family name
Borne by yon clustering cottages, that sprang
From out the ruins of his stately lodge :
These, and the name and title at full length,—
Sir Alfred Erthing, with appropriate words
Accompanied, still extant, in a wreath
Or posy, girding round the several fronts
Of three clear-sounding and harmonious bells,
That in the steeple hang, his pious gift.” †

* “The pillars of the gateway in front of the mansion remained when we first took up our abode at Grasmere. Two or three cottages still remain which are called Nott Houses, from the name of the gentleman (I have called him a knight) concerning whom these traditions survive. He was the ancestor of the *Knott* family, formerly considerable proprietors in the district.”—I. F. MS.—ED.

† It is clear from the Fenwick note (see p. 11) that the title, “Sir Alfred Erthing,” was Wordsworth’s invention. I am indebted to the present Rector of Grasmere—the Reverend Henry M. Fletcher—for the following information as to the bells of the church, and to the “Nott house” :—

“Three bells hang in the tower. That they are ‘clear-sounding and harmonious’ I think may be said of them without poetical license. They have not on them the name and title of their donor. Two of them have coats of arms. My son believes that the quarterings show that they were the gifts of the Flemings of Rydal Hall, patrons, for some hundred years, of the living. The third, and smallest, reports of itself that it was recast at the expense of Mrs Dorothy Knott, in the year 1808, and that Thomas Mears of London did the work. This last inscription is partly in Latin.

"So fails, so languishes, grows dim, and dies,"
 The grey-haired Wanderer pensively exclaimed,
 "All that this world is proud of. From their spheres
 The stars of human glory are cast down;
 Perish the roses and the flowers of kings,*
 Princes, and emperors, and the crowns and palms
 Of all the mighty, withered and consumed!
 Nor is power given to lowliest innocence
 Long to protect her own. The man himself
 Departs; and soon is spent the line of those
 Who, in the bodily image, in the mind,
 In heart or soul, in station or pursuit,
 Did most resemble him. Degrees, and ranks,
 Fraternities and orders—heaping high
 New wealth upon the burthen of the old,
 And placing trust in privilege confirmed
 And re-confirmed—are scoffed at with a smile
 Of greedy foretaste, from the secret stand
 Of Desolation, aimed: to slow decline
 These yield, and these to sudden overthrow:

The two older bells have on them the inscriptions respectively of 'Soli Deo' and 'Gloria in altissimis Deo.'

"Looking over the old book of Church Warden's accounts, I observe that, in the year 1732, there is an item

'Towards casting the bells, and other charges, £40, 3s. 9d.,' and in the following year, 1733, again

'Towards casting the bells, and other charges, £49, 0s. 3d.' This, at a time when the whole of the general charge yearly ranged from £2 to £5. It was a *re-casting*, I presume.

"The 'Nott house' still exists, and is the residence of our chief 'statesman,' James Fleming. It is known as 'Knott's Houses.' In the dialect of this county, when purely used, there is no possessive 's. Mr Fletcher's letters being always, *e.g.*, spoken of at the post-office here as 'Mr Fletcher letters.' 'Nott house,' therefore, meant a house belonging to Mrs Dorothy Knott, or her husband's forefathers. A little group of houses has formed round it; but the old Farm House, I make little doubt, is the one for which you ask." See also Charles Lamb's remarks, quoted in note H in the Appendix to this volume.—Ed.

* See Wordsworth's note, p. 411.—Ed.

Their virtue, service, happiness, and state
Expire ; and nature's pleasant robe of green,
Humanity's appointed shroud, enwraps
Their monuments and their memory. The vast frame
Of social nature changes evermore
Her organs and her members, with decay
Restless, and restless generation, powers
And functions dying and produced at need,—
And by this law the mighty whole subsists :
With an ascent and progress in the main ;
Yet, oh ! how disproportioned to the hopes
And expectations of self-flattering minds !

The courteous Knight, whose bones are here interred,
Lived in an age conspicuous as our own
For strife and ferment in the minds of men ;
Whence alteration in the forms of things,
Various and vast. A memorable age !
Which did to him assign a pensive lot—
To linger 'mid the last of those bright clouds
That, on the steady breeze of honour, sailed
In long procession calm and beautiful.
He who had seen his own bright order fade,
And its devotion gradually decline,
(While war, relinquishing the lance and shield,
Her temper changed, and bowed to other laws)
Had also witnessed, in his morn of life,
That violent commotion, which o'erthrew,
In town and city and sequestered glen,
Altar, and cross, and church of solemn roof,
And old religious house—pile after pile ;
And shook their tenants¹ out into the fields,

¹ 1836.

Like wild beasts without home ! Their hour was come ;
 But why no softening thought of gratitude,
 No just remembrance, scruple, or wise doubt ?
 Benevolence is mild ; nor borrows help,
 Save at worst need, from bold impetuous force,
 Fitliest allied to anger and revenge.
 But Human-kind rejoices in the might
 Of mutability ; and airy hopes,
 Dancing around her, hinder and disturb
 Those meditations of the soul that feed¹
 The retrospective virtues. Festive songs
 Break from the maddened nations at the sight
 Of sudden overthrow ; and cold neglect
 Is the sure consequence of slow decay.

Even," said the Wanderer, " as that courteous Knight,
 Bound by his vow to labour for redress
 Of all who suffer wrong, and to enact
 By sword and lance the law of gentleness,
 (If I may venture of myself to speak,
 Trusting that not incongruously I blend
 Low things with lofty) I too shall be doomed
 To outlive the kindly use and fair esteem
 Of the poor calling which my youth embraced
 With no unworthy prospect. But enough ;
 —Thoughts crowd upon me—and 'twere seemlier now
 To stop, and yield our gracious Teacher thanks
 For the pathetic records which his voice
 Hath here delivered ; words of heartfelt truth,
 Tending to patience when affliction strikes ;
 To hope and love ; to confident repose
 In God ; and reverence for the dust of Man."

¹ 1827.

Book Eighth.

THE PARSONAGE.

ARGUMENT.

Pastor's apology and apprehensions¹ that he might have detained his Auditors too long, with the Pastor's invitation to his house²—Solitary disinclined to comply—rallies the Wanderer—and playfully³ draws a comparison between his itinerant profession and that of the Knight-errant—which leads to Wanderer's giving an account of changes in the Country from the manufacturing spirit—Favourable effects—The other side of the picture, and chiefly as it has affected the humbler classes—Wanderer asserts the hollowness of all national grandeur if unsupported by moral worth⁴—Physical science unable to support itself—Lamentations over an excess of manufacturing industry among the humbler Classes of Society—Picture of a Child employed in a Cotton-mill—Ignorance and degradation of Children among the agricultural Population reviewed—Conversation broken off by a renewed Invitation from the Pastor—Path leading to his House—Its appearance described—His Daughter—His Wife—His Son (a Boy) enters with his Companion—Their happy appearance—The Wanderer how affected by the sight of them.

¹ 1836.*Pastor's apprehensions*

1814.

² 1836.*too long—Invitation to his House—*

1814.

³ 1836.*and somewhat playfully*

1814.

⁴ 1836.*by moral worth—gives Instances—*

1814.

THE pensive Sceptic of the lonely vale
To those acknowledgments subscribed his own,
With a sedate compliance, which the Priest
Failed not to notice, inly pleased, and said :—
“ If ye, by whom invited I began
These narratives ⁵ of calm and humble life,

⁵ 1836.

. I commenced
Those Narratives

1814.

. I commenced
These narratives

1827

Be satisfied, 'tis well,—the end is gained ;
 And, in return for sympathy bestowed
 And patient listening, thanks accept from me.
 —Life, death, eternity ! momentous themes
 Are they—¹ and might demand a seraph's tongue,
 Were they not equal to their own support ;
 And therefore no incompetence of mine
 Could do them wrong. The universal forms
 Of human nature, in a spot like this,
 Present themselves at once to all men's view :
 Ye wished for act and circumstance, that make
 The individual known and understood ;
 And such as my best judgment could select
 From what the place afforded, have been given ;
 Though apprehensions crossed me that my zeal
 To his might well be likened, who unlocks
 A cabinet stored with gems and pictures—draws
 His treasures forth, soliciting regard ²
 To this, and this, as worthier than the last,
 Till the spectator, who awhile was pleased

¹ 1827.

Are these— 1814.

² 1836.

Though apprehensions crossed me, in the course
 Of this self-pleasing exercise, that ye
 My zeal to his would liken, who, possessed
 Of some rare gems, or pictures finely wrought,
 Unlocks his Cabinet, and draws them forth
 One after one,—soliciting regard 1814.

.

My zeal to his would liken, who unlocks
 A cabinet with gems or pictures stored,
 And draws them forth—soliciting regard 1827.

Though apprehensions crossed me that my zeal
 To his might well be likened, who unlocks
 A cabinet with gems or pictures stored,
 And draws them forth—soliciting regard 1832.

More than the exhibitor himself, becomes
 Weary and faint, and longs to be released.
 —But let us hence! my dwelling is in sight,
 And there—”

At this the Solitary shrunk
 With backward will; but, wanting not address
 That inward motion to disguise, he said
 To his Compatriot, smiling as he spake;
 —“The peaceable remains of this good Knight
 Would be disturbed, I fear, with wrathful scorn,
 If consciousness could reach him where he lies
 That one, albeit of these degenerate times,
 Deploring changes past, or dreading change
 Foreseen, had dared to couple, even in thought,
 The fine vocation of the sword and lance
 With the gross aims and body-bending toil
 Of a poor brotherhood who walk the earth
 Pitied, and, where they are not known, despised.

Yet, by the good Knight's leave, the two estates
 Are graced with some resemblance. Errant those,
 Exiles and wanderers—and the like are these;
 Who, with their burthen, traverse hill and dale,
 Carrying relief for nature's simple wants.

—What though no higher recompense be sought¹
 Than honest maintenance, by irksome toil
 Full oft procured, yet may they claim respect,²
 Among the intelligent, for what this course
 Enables them to be and to perform.
 Their tardy steps give leisure to observe,
 While solitude permits the mind to feel;

¹ 1836.

. they seek 1814.

² 1836.

. . . ! Yet Such may claim respect, 1814.

Instructs, and prompts her to supply defects¹
 By the division of her inward self
 For grateful converse: and to these poor men
 Nature (I but repeat your favourite boast)
 Is bountiful—go wheresoe'er they may;²
 Kind nature's various wealth is all their own.
 Versed in the characters of men; and bound,
 By ties³ of daily interest, to maintain
 Conciliatory manners and smooth speech;
 Such have been, and still are in their degree,
 Examples efficacious to refine
 Rude intercourse; apt agents to expel,⁴
 By importation of unlooked-for arts,
 Barbarian torpor, and blind prejudice;
 Raising, through just gradation, savage life
 To rustic, and the rustic to urbane.
 —Within their moving magazines is lodged
 Power that comes forth to quicken and exalt
 Affections⁵ seated in the mother's breast,
 And in the lover's fancy; and to feed
 The sober sympathies of long-tried friends.
 —By these Itinerants, as experienced men,
 Counsel is given; contention they appease
 With gentle language; in remotest wilds,⁶

¹ 1827.

And doth instruct her to supply defects 1814.

² 1836.

(As I have heard you boast with honest pride)
 Nature is bountiful, where'er they go; 1814.

³ 1832.

By tie 1814.

⁴ 1827.

. apt Instruments to excite, 1814.

⁵ 1827.

The affections 1814

⁶ 1827.

With healing words; and in remotest Wilds 1814.

Tears wipe away, and pleasant tidings bring;
 Could the proud quest of chivalry do more?"

"Happy," rejoined the Wanderer, "they who gain
 A panegyric from your generous tongue!
 But, if to these Wayfarers once pertained
 Aught of romantic interest, it is gone.¹
 Their purer service, in this realm at least,
 Is past for ever.—An inventive Age
 Has wrought, if not with speed of magic, yet
 To most strange issues. I have lived to mark
 A new and unforeseen creation rise
 From out the labours of a peaceful Land
 Wielding her potent enginery to frame
 And to produce, with appetite as keen
 As that of war, which rests not night or day,
 Industrious to destroy!* With fruitless pains
 Might one like me *now* visit many a tract
 Which, in his youth, he trod, and trod again,
 A lone pedestrian with a scanty freight,†
 Wished-for, or welcome, wheresoe'er he came—

¹ 1836.

'tis gone.

1814.

* "What follows in the discourse of the 'Wanderer,' upon the changes he had witnessed in rural life by the introduction of machinery, is truly described from what I myself saw during my boyhood and early youth, and from what was often told me by persons of this humble calling. Happily, most happily, for these mountains, the mischief was diverted from the banks of their beautiful streams, and transferred to open and flat counties abounding in coal, where the agency of steam was found much more effectual for carrying on those demoralising works. Had it not been for this invention, long before the present time, every torrent and river in this district would have had its factory, large and populous in proportion to the power of the water that could there be commanded. Parliament has interfered to prevent the night-work which was carried on in these mills as actively as during the day-time, and by necessity, still more perniciously; a sad disgrace to the proprietors and to the nation which could so long tolerate such unnatural proceedings."—I. F. MS.—ED.

† In 1788, and again in 1794, Wordsworth visited Westmoreland and Cumberland as a pedestrian. Compare the sixth book of *The Prelude*, entitled "Cambridge and the Alps" (Vol. III., p. 236).—ED.

Among the tenantry of thorpe and vill ; *
 Or straggling burgh, of ancient charter proud,
 And dignified by battlements and towers
 Of some stern castle, mouldering on the brow
 Of a green hill or bank of rugged stream.†
 The foot-path faintly marked, the horse-track wild,
 And formidable length of plashy lane,
 (Prized avenues ere others had been shaped
 Or easier links connecting place with place)
 Have vanished—swallowed up by stately roads
 Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom
 Of Britain's ¹ farthest glens. The Earth has lent
 Her waters, Air her breezes ; ‡ and the sail
 Of traffic glides with ceaseless intercourse, ² §
 Glistening along the low and woody dale ;
 Or, in its progress, on the lofty side,
 Of some bare hill, with wonder kenned from far. ³ ¶

¹ 1827.

Of England's 1814.

² 1836.

. interchange, 1814.

³ 1836.. woody dale,
 Or on the naked mountain's lofty side. 1814.

* Thorpe; Anglo-Saxon *Thorp*, a homestead, or hamlet; allied to *turba*, a crowd (as of houses). Vill; a little village or farm. Lat. *villa*, dimin. of *vicus*.—Ed.

† Evidently a reminiscence of Penrith, a 'straggling burgh, of ancient charter proud,' with its castle on 'the brow of a green hill,' and with Brougham Castle close at hand, 'on bank of rugged stream.' See the *Prelude*, (Vol. III., p. 237), and compare Gray's *Journal*.—Ed.

‡ See Wordsworth's note, p. 411.—Ed.

§ Mr Rawnsley has suggested that this may refer to the introduction of canal boats into England. It is more likely, I think, that Wordsworth had in his mind's eye

That animating spectacle of sails
 That, through her inland regions, to and fro
 Pass with the respirations of the tide,
 Perpetual, multitudinous,

referred to in pp. 342-3, a reminiscence perhaps of what he had often seen in the Bristol Channel.—Ed.

¶ See last note. The phrase 'on the lofty side of some bare hill,' occa-

Meanwhile, at social Industry's command,
 How quick, how vast an increase! From the germ
 Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced
 Here a huge town, continuous and compact,
 Hiding the face of earth for leagues—and there,
 Where not a habitation stood before,
 Abodes¹ of men irregularly massed
 Like trees in forests,—spread through spacious tracts,
 O'er which the smoke of unremitting fires
 Hangs permanent,* and plentiful as wreaths
 Of vapour glittering in the morning sun.
 And, wheresoe'er the traveller turns his steps,
 He sees the barren wilderness erased,
 Or disappearing; triumph that proclaims
 How much the mild Directress of the plough
 Owes to alliance with these new-born arts!
 —Hence is the wide sea peopled,—hence the shores²
 Of Britain are resorted to by ships
 Freight from every climate of the world
 With the world's choicest produce. Hence that sum
 Of keels that rest within her crowded ports,
 Or ride at anchor in her sounds and bays;
 That animating spectacle of sails

¹ 1827.

The abodes 1814.

² 1827.

. and the shores 1814.

sions some difficulty; and, taken in connection with the previous clause, 'air hath lent her breezes,' suggests the idea of a windmill, seen in its slow movement, far off on a bare hill-side. But I rather think it is the progress of the 'sails of traffic,' on the waters of an inland tidal channel that is still referred to; the masts and sails of the vessels being seen moving onwards, while the water itself is hidden, and the spectacle is therefore by the rustic eye, 'with wonder kenned from far.' I would be disposed to think that there was a misprint here, and that we should read '*from* the lofty side' instead of 'on,' did the latter reading not occur in the edition of 1814, as well as in 1836, and all the subsequent editions.—ED.

* Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield.—ED.

That,¹ through her inland regions, to and fro
 Pass with the respirations of the tide,
 Perpetual, multitudinous! Finally,
 Hence a dread arm of floating power, a voice
 Of thunder daunting those who would approach
 With hostile purposes the blessed Isle,
 Truth's consecrated residence, the seat
 Impregnable of Liberty and Peace.

And yet, O happy Pastor of a flock
 Faithfully watched, and, by that loving care
 And Heaven's good providence, preserved from taint!
 With you I grieve, when on the darker side
 Of this great change I look; and there behold
 Such outrage² done to nature as compels
 The indignant power to justify herself;
 Yea, to avenge her violated rights,
 For England's bane.—When soothing darkness spreads
 O'er hill and vale," the Wanderer thus expressed
 His recollections, "and the punctual stars,
 While all things else are gathering to their homes,
 Advance, and in the firmament of heaven
 Glitter—but undisturbing, undisturbed;
 As if their silent company were charged
 With peaceful admonitions for the heart
 Of all-beholding Man, earth's thoughtful lord;
 Then, in full many a region, once like this
 The assured domain of calm simplicity
 And pensive quiet, an unnatural light

¹ 1836.

Which

1814.

² 1827.

. and there behold,
 Through strong temptation of those gainful Arts,
 Such outrage

1814.

Prepared for never-resting Labour's eyes
 Breaks from a many-windowed fabric huge ;*
 And at the appointed hour a bell is heard—
 Of harsher import than the curfew-knoll
 That spake the Norman Conqueror's stern behest—†
 A local summons to unceasing toil !
 Disgorged are now the ministers of day ;
 And, as they issue from the illumined pile,
 A fresh band meets them, at the crowded door—
 And in the courts—and where the rumbling stream,
 That turns the multitude of dizzy wheels,‡
 Glares, like a troubled spirit, in its bed
 Among the rocks below. Men, maidens, youths,
 Mother and little children, boys and girls,
 Enter, and each the wonted task resumes
 Within this temple, where is offered up
 To Gain, the master idol of the realm,
 Perpetual sacrifice. Even thus of old
 Our ancestors, within the still domain
 Of vast cathedral or conventual church,
 Their vigils kept ; where tapers day and night
 On the dim altar burned continually,
 In token that the House was evermore
 Watching to God. Religious men were they ;
 Nor would their reason, tutored to aspire
 Above this transitory world, allow
 That there should pass a moment of the year¹
 When in their land the Almighty's service ceased.

¹ 1814-1845.

A single moment through the year should pass	C.
--	----

That even a moment of the year should pass	C.
--	----

* See the Fenwick note, p. 339.—Ed.

† The curfew-bell, introduced into England by William of Normandy, in 1068.—Ed.

‡ Compare Mrs Browning's *Cry of the Children*, stanza vii.—Ed.

Triumph who will in these profaner rites
 Which we, a generation self-extolled,
 As zealously perform ! I cannot share
 His proud complacency :—yet do I exult,¹
 Casting reserve away, exult to see
 An intellectual mastery exercised
 O'er the blind elements ; a purpose given,
 A perseverance fed ; almost a soul
 Imparted—to brute matter. I rejoice,
 Measuring the force of those gigantic powers
 That,² by the thinking mind, have been compelled
 To serve the will of feeble-bodied Man.
 For with the sense of admiration blends
 The animating hope that time may come
 When, strengthened, yet not dazzled, by the might
 Of this dominion over nature gained,
 Men of all lands shall exercise the same
 In due proportion to their country's need ;
 Learning, though late, that all true glory rests,
 All praise, all safety, and all happiness,
 Upon the moral law. Egyptian Thebes,
 Tyre, by the margin of the sounding waves,
 Palmyra, central in the desert, fell ;
 And the Arts died by which they had been raised.*

¹ 1836.

. yet I exult, 1814.

² 1827.

Which 1814.

* The foundation of Thebes was ascribed to the mythical Manes. The ground on which it stood was large enough to contain a city equal in extent with ancient Rome, or modern Paris ; . . . an immense area was covered with Temples, and their avenues of Sphinxes. (Cf. Diodorus, I. 40, 50. Strabo, xvii. p. 805, 815. fol., and Smith's Dictionary of Ancient Geography.) Tyre, in Phœnicia, was built partly on an island and partly on the mainland. The island city "must have arisen in the period between Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great." . . . "The western side of the island is now submerged, to the extent of more than a mile ; and that this was once

—Call Archimedes from his buried tomb
 Upon the grave¹ of vanished Syracuse,†
 And feelingly the Sage shall make report
 How insecure, how baseless in itself,
 Is the Philosophy whose sway depends
 On² mere material instruments;—how weak

¹ 1836.

Upon the plain 1814.

² 1827.

Is that Philosophy, whose sway is framed
 For 1814.

occupied by the city is shewn by the bases of columns which may still be discerned. Benjamin of Tudela mentions that, in the end of the 12th century, towns, markets, streets, and halls might be observed at the bottom of the sea." (Smith's Dict. of Ancient Geography.) Palmyra, or Tadmor, —the city of palms,—was enlarged, if not built, by Solomon in the 10th century B.C. It is situated in a well-watered oasis, in the great Syrian desert. It was an independent city under the first Roman Emperors, and is called a *colonia* on the coins of Carracalla. In 273 A.D. it had dwindled into an insignificant town. The ruins are inferior to those of Baalbec, but have a grandeur of their own. They are chiefly of the Corinthian order; although the most magnificent of them—the *Temple of the Sun*—is Ionic.—ED.

† I am indebted to the Rev. H. G. Woods, Trinity Coll., Oxford, for the following note on the tomb of Archimedes:—

"The tomb now shown at Syracuse as that of Archimedes corresponds pretty well in point of situation with Cicero's description ('Tusculan Disputations,' V. 23). It is a little distance to the west of the wall of Achradina, on the left of the road which mounts the slope of Epipolæ. I unfortunately cannot remember whether there were any traces of the sphere and cylinder inscribed on it, which Cicero mentions as there when he excavated it; but my impression at the time was, that its identity rested simply on a Ciceronic tradition, and that it was hardly more genuine than Virgil's tomb at Naples. The tomb itself resembled a number of other tombs near—among them, the reputed tomb of Timoleon, which is close by (Cicero speaks of the number of tombs in that spot). But, whatever the value of the identifying tradition, there can be no doubt that Wordsworth, in these lines, has thoroughly reproduced the local colour of the surroundings. As one mounts the road I mentioned, past the tomb of Archimedes, and gets the view over Achradina—once so populous, and now a waste area covered with grey rocks and grass, save where, here and there, it is converted by irrigation into fertile gardens and fields—one has strongly brought before him how completely Syracuse has 'vanished.' The modern city is entirely confined within the limits of Ortygia, and the general impression that one gets of Achradina is that it is the graveyard of the old city. I remember that this feeling came over me very strongly at the time, but it was certainly not suggested by Wordsworth's lines, which I did not remember."—ED.

Those arts, and high inventions, if unpropped
 By virtue.—He, sighing with pensive grief,¹
 Amid his calm abstractions, would admit
 That not the slender privilege is theirs
 To save themselves from blank forgetfulness !”

When from the Wanderer's lips these words had fallen,
 I said, “ And, did in truth those vaunted Arts²
 Possess such privilege, how could we escape
 Sadness and keen regret, we who revere,³
 And would preserve as things above all price,
 The old domestic morals of the land,
 Her simple manners, and the stable worth
 That dignified and cheered a low estate ?
 Oh ! where is now the character of peace,
 Sobriety, and order, and chaste love,
 And honest dealing, and untainted speech,
 And pure good-will, and hospitable cheer ;
 That made the very thought of country-life
 A thought of refuge, for a mind detained
 Reluctantly amid the bustling crowd ?
 Where now the beauty of the sabbath kept
 With conscientious reverence, as a day
 By the almighty Lawgiver pronounced
 Holy and blest ? and where the winning grace
 Of all the lighter ornaments attached
 To time and season, as the year rolled round ? ”

“ Fled ! ” was the Wanderer's passionate response,

¹ 1849.

.. .. He with sighs of pensive grief, 1814.

² 1836.

.. .. these vaunted Arts 1814.

³ 1836.

Regret and painful sadness, who revere, 1814.

“Fled utterly ! or only to be traced
In a few fortunate retreats like this ;
Which I behold with trembling, when I think
What lamentable change, a year—a month—
May bring ; that brook converting as it runs
Into an instrument of deadly bane
For those, who, yet untempted to forsake
The simple occupations of their sires,
Drink the pure water of its innocent stream
With lip almost as pure.—Domestic bliss
(Or call it comfort, by a humbler name,)
How art thou blighted for the poor Man’s heart !
Lo ! in such neighbourhood, from morn to eve,
The habitations empty ! or perchance
The Mother left alone,—no helping hand
To rock the cradle of her peevish babe ;
No daughters round her, busy at the wheel,
Or in dispatch of each day’s little growth
Of household occupation ; no nice arts
Of needle-work ; no bustle at the fire,
Where once the dinner was prepared with pride ;
Nothing to speed the day, or cheer the mind ;
Nothing to praise, to teach, or to command !

The Father, if perchance he still retain
His old employments, goes to field or wood,
No longer led or followed by the Sons ;¹
Idlers perchance they were,—but in *his* sight ;
Breathing fresh air, and treading the green earth ;
'Till their short holiday of childhood ceased,
Ne’er to return ! That birthright now is lost.
Economists will tell you that the State

¹ 1820.

Thrives by the forfeiture—unfeeling thought,
 And false as monstrous ! Can the mother thrive
 By the destruction of her innocent sons
 In whom a premature necessity
 Blocks out the forms of nature, preconsumes
 The reason, famishes the heart, shuts up
 The infant Being in itself, and makes
 Its very spring a season of decay !
 The lot is wretched, the condition sad,
 Whether a pining discontent survive,
 And thirst for change ; or habit hath subdued
 The soul deprest, dejected—even to love
 Of her close tasks, and long captivity.¹

Oh, banish far such wisdom as condemns
 A native Briton to these inward chains,
 Fixed in his soul, so early and so deep ;
 Without his own consent, or knowledge, fixed !
 He is a slave to whom release comes not,
 And cannot come. The boy, where'er he turns,
 Is still a prisoner ; when the wind is up
 Among the clouds, and roars through the ancient woods ;²
 Or when the sun is shining in the east,³
 Quiet and calm. Behold him—in the school
 Of his attainments ? no ; but with the air
 Fanning his temples under heaven's blue arch.
 His raiment, whitened o'er with cotton-flakes
 Or locks of wool, announces whence he comes.
 Creeping his gait and cowering, his lip pale,
 His respiration quick and audible ;

¹ 1836.

Of her dull tasks, and close captivity.

1814.

² 1836.

and in the ancient woods ;

1814.

³ 1827.

is rising in the heavens,

1814.

And scarcely could you fancy that a gleam
 Could break from out those languid eyes, or a blush ¹
 Mantle upon his cheek. Is this the form,
 Is that the countenance, and such the port,
 Of no mean Being? One who should be clothed
 With dignity befitting his proud hope;
 Who, in his very childhood, should appear
 Sublime from present purity and joy!
 The limbs increase; but liberty of mind
 Is gone for ever; and this organic frame,
 So joyful in its motions, is become ²
 Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead;
 And even the touch, so exquisitely poured
 Through the whole body, with a languid will
 Performs its functions; ³ rarely competent
 To impress a vivid feeling on the mind
 Of what there is delightful in the breeze,
 The gentle visitations of the sun,
 Or lapse of liquid element—by hand,
 Or foot, or lip, in summer's warmth—perceived.
 —Can hope look forward to a manhood raised
 On such foundations? ”

“ Hope is none for him ! ”

The pale Recluse indignantly exclaimed,

¹ 1836.

From out those languid eyes could break, or blush 1814.

² 1840.

Thus gone for ever, this organic Frame,
 Which from heaven's bounty we receive, instinct
 With light, and gladsome motions, soon becomes 1814.

Is gone for ever; this organic Frame
 So joyful in her motions, is become 1827.

The limbs increase; but this organic Frame,
 So gladsome in its motions, is become 1836.

³ 1814.

Performs her functions 1827.

1832 returns to 1814.

" And tens of thousands suffer wrong as deep.
 Yet be it asked, in justice to our age,
 If there were not, before those arts appeared,
 These structures rose, commingling old and young,
 And unripe sex with sex, for mutual taint ;
 If there were not, *then*,¹ in our far-famed Isle,
 Multitudes, who from infancy had breathed
 Air unimprisoned, and had lived at large ;
 Yet walked beneath the sun, in human shape,
 As abject, as degraded ? At this day,
 Who shall enumerate the crazy huts
 And tottering hovels, whence do issue forth
 A ragged Offspring, with their upright hair ²
 Crowned like the image of fantastic Fear ;
 Or wearing, (shall we say ?) ³ in that white growth
 An ill-adjusted turban, for defence
 Or fierceness, wreathed around their sun-burnt brows,
 By savage Nature ? Shrivelled are their lips ; ⁴
 Naked, and coloured like the soil, the feet
 On which they stand ; as if thereby they drew
 Some nourishment, as trees do by their roots,
 From earth, the common mother of us all.
 Figure and mien, complexion and attire,
 Are leagued to strike dismay ; but outstretched hand ⁵
 And whining voice denote them supplicants .

¹ 1836.

Then, if there were not, 1814.

² 1836.

. . . with their own blanched hair 1814.

³ 1836.

Or wearing, we might say, 1814.

⁴ 1836.

By savage Nature's unassisted care. 1814.

⁵ 1827.Are framed to strike dismay, but the outstretched
hand

1814.

For the least boon that pity can bestow.
 Such on the breast of darksome heaths are found ;
 And with their parents occupy the skirts ¹
 Of furze-clad commons ; such are born and reared
 At the mine's mouth under impending rocks ; ²
 Or dwell in chambers of some natural cave ;
 Or ³ where their ancestors erected huts,
 For the convenience of unlawful gain,
 In forest purlieus ; and the like are bred,
 All England through, where nooks and slips of ground
 Parloined, in times less jealous than our own,
 From the green margin of the public way,
 A residence afford them, 'mid the bloom
 And gaiety of cultivated fields.
 Such (we will hope the lowest in the scale)
 Do I remember oft-times to have seen
 'Mid Buxton's dreary heights.* In earnest watch, ⁴
 Till the swift vehicle approach, they stand ;
 Then, following closely with the cloud of dust,

¹ 1836.

. dwell upon the skirts 1814.

² 1827.

. ; and are born and reared
 At the mine's mouth, beneath impending rocks, 1814.

³ 1836.

Or in the chambers of some natural cave ;
 And 1814.

Or in the chambers of some natural cave ;
 Or 1827.

Or in the chambers of some natural cave ;
 And 1832.

⁴ 1836.

. Upon the watch, 1814.

* The heights between Buxton and Macclesfield, at the top of the Valley of the Gite, near the Cat and Fiddle Inn.—Ed.

An uncouth feat exhibit, and are gone
 Heels over head, like tumblers on a stage.
 —Up from the ground they snatch the copper coin,
 And, on the freight of merry passengers
 Fixing a steady eye, maintain their speed;
 And spin—and pant—and overhead again,
 Wild pursuivants! until their breath is lost,
 Or bounty tires—and every face, that smiled
 Encouragement, hath ceased to look that way.
 —But, like the vagrants of the gipsy tribe,
 These, bred to little pleasure in themselves,
 Are profitless to others.

Turn we then

to Britons born and bred within the pale
 Of civil polity, and early trained
 To earn, by wholesome labour in the field,
 The bread they eat. A sample should I give
 Of what this stock hath long produced to enrich
 The tender age of life, ye would exclaim,¹
 'Is this the whistling plough-boy whose shrill notes
 Impart new gladness to the morning air!'
 Forgive me if I venture to suspect
 That many, sweet to hear of in soft verse,
 Are of no finer frame. Stiff are his joints;²
 Beneath a cumbrous frock, that to the knees
 Invests the thriving churl, his legs appear,

¹ 1836.

Of what this stock produces to enrich
 And beautify the tender age of life,
 A sample fairly culled, ye would exclaim,

1814.

Of what this stock produces to enrich
 The tender age of life, ye would exclaim,

1827.

² 1836.

. :—his joints are stiff;

1814.

Fellows to those that lustily upheld¹
 The wooden stools for everlasting use,
 Whereon² our fathers sate. And mark his brow
 Under whose shaggy canopy are set
 Two eyes—not dim, but of a healthy stare—³
 Wide, sluggish, blank, and ignorant, and strange—
 Proclaiming boldly that they never drew
 A look or motion of intelligence
 From infant-conning of the Christ-cross-row,*
 Or puzzling through a primer, line by line,
 Till perfect mastery crown the pains at last.

¹ 1827.

. which lustily upheld 1814.

² 1827.

On which 1814.

³ 1814-1840.

Two eyes—not dim, but of a vacant stare. C.

* “The alphabet was called the Christ-cross-row, some say because a cross was prefixed to the alphabet in the old primers; but as probably from a superstitious custom of writing the alphabet in the form of a cross, by way of charm.” (Archdeacon Nares’ *Glossary*, Art. “Christ-cross-row.”)

“The A B C horn-book, containing the alphabet, and nine digits. The most ancient of these infant school-books had the letters arranged in the form of a Latin cross, with A at the top and Z at the bottom. Afterwards the letters were arranged in lines, and a + was placed at the beginning to remind the reader that ‘the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.’

“Mortals ne’er shall know

More than contained of old the cris-cross-row.”

—Tickell, *The Horn-Book*.

(See Brewer’s *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*.)

At the beginning of a poem by the Rev. J. S. Hawkes, called *A Christ-cross-Rhyme*, we find

“Christ, his cross, shall be my speed,

Teach me, father John, to read.”

“The origin of the cross in drawing or writing was to define or make a point, especially a point to start or measure from. But it was impossible that it should be used long, without reference being suffered to be made to the cross of Christ, and it must soon have been regarded as invoking Christ’s blessing upon the commencement of any writing.”—W. W. Skeat in *Notes and Queries*, 3d Series, XI. May 4, 1867.

“And from the cross-row pluck the letter G.”

—Shakespeare, *Richard III.*, Act. i., Sc. 1.—Ed.

—What kindly warmth from touch of fostering hand,
 What penetrating power of sun or breeze,
 Shall e'er dissolve the crust wherein his soul
 Sleeps, like a caterpillar sheathed in ice ?
 This torpor is no pitiable work
 Of modern ingenuity ; no town
 Nor crowded city can be taxed with aught ¹
 Of sottish vice or desperate breach of law,
 To which (and who can tell where or how soon ?)
 He may be roused. This Boy the fields produce :
 His spade and hoe, mattock and glittering scythe,²
 The carter's whip that ³ on his shoulder rests
 In air high-towering with a boorish pomp,
 The sceptre of his sway ; his country's name,
 Her equal rights, her churches and her schools—
 What have they done for him ? And, let me ask,
 For tens of thousands uninformed as he ?
 In brief, what liberty of *mind* is here ?”

This ardent sally ⁴ pleased the mild good Man,
 To whom the appeal couched in its closing words ⁵
 Was pointedly addressed ; and to the thoughts
 That, ⁶ in assent or opposition, rose

¹ 1836. . . . may be taxed with aught 1814.

² 1836. To which in after years he may be roused.
 —This Boy the Fields produce : his spade and hoe, 1814.

³ 1827. The Carter's whip which . . . 1814.

⁴ 1827. This cheerful sally . . . 1814.

⁵ 1827. . . . in those closing words 1814.

⁶ 1827. Which, . . . 1814.

Within his mind, he seemed prepared to give
 Prompt utterance ; but the Vicar interposed ¹
 With invitation urgently renewed.²
 —We followed, taking as he led, a path
 Along a hedge of hollies dark and tall,³ *
 Whose flexile boughs low bending with a weight ⁴
 Of leafy spray, concealed the stems and roots
 That gave them nourishment. When frosty winds
 Howl from the north, what kindly warmth, methought,
 Is here—how grateful this impervious screen ! ⁵
 —Not shaped by simple wearing of the foot
 On rural business passing to and fro
 Was the commodious walk : a careful hand
 Had marked the line, and strewn its surface o'er ⁶
 With pure cerulean gravel,* from the heights

¹ 1836.

Prompt utterance ; but, rising from our seat,
 The hospitable Vicar interposed

1814.

² 1827.

With invitation earnestly renewed.

1814.

³ 1827.

Along a Hedge of stately hollies framed,

1814.

⁴ 1836.

Whose flexile boughs, descending with a weight

1814.

⁵ 1827.

That gave them nourishment. How sweet me-
 thought,

When the fierce wind comes howling from the north,
 How grateful, this impenetrable screen !

1814.

⁶ 1836.

. the surface o'er

1814.

* The 'hedge of hollies dark and tall,' and the 'pure cerulean gravel' on the walk between the 'pastor's mansion' and the 'house of prayer,' are all due to the imagination of the poet. There is nothing now—either at Hackett or at the parsonage in Grasmere—at all corresponding to the details given in *The Excursion* ; and it is not likely that the surroundings of either house in Wordsworth's time resembled the description given in the poem.—ED.

Fetched by a¹ neighbouring brook.—Across the vale
 The stately fence accompanied our steps ;
 And thus the pathway, by perennial green
 Guarded and graced, seemed fashioned to unite,
 As by a beautiful yet solemn chain,
 The Pastor's mansion with the house of prayer.

Like image of solemnity, conjoined
 With feminine allurements soft and fair,
 The mansion's self displayed ;—a reverend pile
 With bold projections and recesses deep ;
 Shadowy, yet gay and lightsome as it stood
 Fronting the noontide sun. We paused to admire
 The pillared porch, elaborately embossed ;
 The low wide windows with their mullions old ;
 The cornice, richly fretted, of grey stone ;
 And that smooth slope from which the dwelling rose,
 By beds and banks Arcadian of gay flowers
 And flowering shrubs, protected and adorned :
 Profusion bright ! and every flower assuming
 A more than natural vividness of hue,
 From unaffected contrast with the gloom
 Of sober cypress, and the darker foil
 Of yew, in which survived some traces, here
 Not unbecoming, of grotesque device
 And uncouth fancy. From behind the roof
 Rose the slim ash and massy sycamore,
 Blending their diverse foliage with the green
 Of ivy, flourishing and thick, that clasped
 The huge round chimneys, harbour of delight
 For wren and redbreast,—where they sit and sing
 Their slender ditties when the trees are bare.

¹ 1836.

Nor must I leave untouched (the picture else
 Were incomplete) a relique of old times ¹
 Happily spared, a little Gothic niche
 Of nicest workmanship; that once had held ²
 The sculptured image of some patron-saint,
 Or of the blessed virgin, looking down
 On all who entered those religious doors.

But lo! where from the rocky garden-mount
 Crowned by its antique summer-house—descends,
 Light as the silver fawn, a radiant Girl;
 For she hath recognised her honoured friend,
 The Wanderer ever welcome! A prompt kiss
 The gladsome Child bestows at his request;
 And, up the flowery lawn as we advance,
 Hangs on the old Man with a happy look,
 And with a pretty restless hand of love.
 —We enter—by the Lady of the place
 Cordially greeted. Graceful was her port: ³
 A lofty stature undepressed by time,
 Whose visitation had not wholly spared ⁴
 The finer lineaments of form and face; ⁵
 To that complexion brought which prudence trusts in

¹ 1827.

Nor must I passed unnoticed (leaving else
 The picture incomplete, as it appeared
 Before our eyes) a relique of old times

1814.

² 1827.

. ; which once had held

1814.

³ 1827.

—We enter;—need I tell the courteous guise
 In which the Lady of the place received
 Our little Band, with salutation meet
 To each accorded? Graceful was her port;

1814.

⁴ 1827.

. had not spared to touch

1814.

⁵ 1827.

. of frame and face;

1814.

And wisdom loves.—But when a stately ship
 Sails in smooth weather by the placid coast *
 On homeward voyage, what—if wind and wave,
 And hardship undergone in various climes,
 Have caused her to abate the virgin pride,
 And that full trim of inexperienced hope
 With which she left her haven—not for this,
 Should the sun strike her, and the impartial breeze
 Play on her streamers, fails she to assume ¹
 Brightness and touching beauty of her own,
 That charm all eyes. So bright, so fair, appeared ²
 This goodly Matron, shining in the beams
 Of unexpected pleasure.—Soon the board
 Was spread, and we partook a plain repast.

Here, resting in cool shelter, we beguiled ³
 The mid-day hours with desultory talk;
 From trivial themes to general argument
 Passing, as accident or fancy led,
 Or courtesy prescribed. While question rose
 And answer flowed, the fetters of reserve
 Dropping from every mind, the Solitary ⁴
 Resumed the manners of his happier days;
 And ⁵ in the various conversation bore

¹ 1827.

. . . . , doth she fail to assume 1814.

² 1827.

. . . . So bright to us appeared 1814.

³ 1827.

Here in cool shelter, while the scorching heat
 Oppressed the fields, we sate, and entertained 1814.

⁴ 1827.

Dropped from our minds; and even the shy Recluse 1814.

⁵ 1827.

He 1814.

* A reminiscence of St Bees, or of days spent on the Cumbrian coast. Compare the sonnets, *With Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh*, and *Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?* Vol. IV. pp. 33, 34.—Ed.

A willing, nay,¹ at times, a forward part ;
 Yet with the grace of one who in the world
 Had learned the art of pleasing, and had now
 Occasion given him to display his skill,
 Upon the steadfast 'vantage-ground of truth.
 He gazed, with admiration unsuppressed,
 Upon the landscape of the sun-bright vale,
 Seen, from the shady room in which we sate,
 In softened perspective ; and more than once
 Praised the consummate harmony serene
 Of gravity and elegance, diffused
 Around the mansion and its whole domain ;
 Not, doubtless, without help of female taste
 And female care.—“ A blessed lot is yours ! ”
 The words escaped his lip, with a tender sigh
 Breathed over them : but suddenly the door
 Flew open, and a pair of lusty Boys²
 Appeared, confusion checking their delight.
 —Not brothers they in feature or attire,
 But fond companions, so I guessed, in field,
 And by the river's margin—whence they come,
 Keen anglers with unusual spoil elated.³
 One bears a willow-pannier on his back,
 The boy of plainer garb, whose blush survives
 More deeply tinged. Twin might the other be

¹ 1827.

A willing, and, 1814.

² 1827.He said, and with that exclamation breathed
 A tender sigh ;—but, suddenly the door
 Opening, with eager haste two lusty Boys 1814.³ 1836.And by the river-side—from which they come,
 A pair of Anglers, laden with their spoil. 1814.
 And by the river's margin—whence they come,
 Anglers elated with unusual spoil. 1827.

To that fair girl who from the garden-mount
 Bounded :—triumphant entry this for him !¹
 Between his hands he holds a smooth blue stone,
 On whose capacious surface see outspread²
 Large store of gleaming crimson-spotted trouts ;
 Ranged side by side, and lessening by degrees³
 Up to the dwarf that tops the pinnacle.
 Upon the board he lays the sky-blue stone
 With its rich freight ;⁴ their number he proclaims ;
 Tells from what pool the noblest had been dragged ;
 And where the very monarch of the brook,
 After long struggle, had escaped at last—
 Stealing alternately at them and us
 (As doth his comrade too) a look of pride :
 And, verily, the silent creatures made
 A splendid sight, together thus exposed ;
 Dead—but not sullied or deformed by death,
 That seemed to pity what he could not spare.

But O, the animation in the mien
 Of those two boys ! yea in the very words
 With which the young narrator was inspired,
 When, as our questions led, he told at large
 Of that day's prowess ! Him might I compare,

¹ 1827.

The Boy of plainer garb, and more abashed
 In countenance,—more distant and retired.
 Twin might the Other be to that fair Girl
 Who bounded tow'rds us from the garden mount.
 Triumphant entry this to him !—for see,

1814.

² 1827.

. is outspread

1814.

³ 1827.

Ranged side by side, in regular ascent,
 One after one, still lessening by degrees

1814.

⁴ 1827.

With its rich spoil ;—

1814.

His looks,¹ tones, gestures, eager eloquence,
 To a bold brook that ² splits for better speed,
 And at the self-same moment, works its way
 Through many channels, ever and anon
 Parted and re-united: his compeer
 To the still lake, whose stillness is to sight ³
 As beautiful—as grateful to the mind.
 —But to what object shall the lovely Girl
 Be likened? She whose countenance and air
 Unite the graceful qualities of both,
 Even as she shares the pride and joy of both.

My grey-haired Friend was moved; his vivid eye
 Glistened with tenderness; his mind, I knew,
 Was full; and had, I doubted not, returned,
 Upon this impulse, to the theme—erewhile
 Abruptly broken of. The ruddy boys
 Withdrew, on summons to their well-earned meal; ⁴
 And He—to whom all tongues resigned their rights
 With willingness, to whom the general ear
 Listened with readier patience than to strain
 Of music, lute or harp, a long delight
 That ceased not when his voice had ceased—as One
 Who from truth's central point serenely views
 The compass of his argument—began
 Mildly, and with a clear and steady tone.

¹ 1836.

His look, 1814.

² 1827.

To a bold Brook which 1814.

³ 1827.

. is to the eye 1814.

⁴ 1827.

Did now withdraw to take their well-earned meal; 1814.

Book Ninth.

DISCOURSE OF THE WANDERER, AND AN EVENING
VISIT TO THE LAKE.*

ARGUMENT.

Wanderer asserts that an active principle pervades the Universe, its noblest seat the human soul—How lively this principle is in Childhood—Hence the delight in old Age of looking back upon Childhood—The dignity, powers, and privileges of Age asserted—These not to be looked for generally but under a just government—Right of a human Creature to be exempt from being considered as a mere Instrument¹—The condition of multitudes deplored²—Former conversation recurred to, and the Wanderer's opinions set in a clearer light³—Truth placed within reach of the humblest—Equality—Happy state of the two Boys again adverted to—Earnest wish expressed for a System of National Education established universally by Government—Glorious effects of this foretold—Walk to the Lake⁴—Grand spectacle from the side of a hill—Address of Priest to the Supreme Being—in the course of which he contrasts with ancient Barbarism the present appearance of the scene before him—The change ascribed to Christianity—Apostrophe to his flock, living and dead—Gratitude to the Almighty—Return over the Lake—Parting with the Solitary—Under what circumstances.

¹ 1836.

Vicious inclinations are best kept under by giving good ones an opportunity to shew themselves. 1814.

² 1836.

Deplored from want of due respect to this truth on the part of their superiors in society. 1814.

³ 1836.

Genuine principles of equality. 1814.

⁴ 1836.

Wanderer breaks off—Walk to the Lake—embark—Description of scenery and amusements. 1814.

* “Upon the side of Loughrigg Fell, at the foot of the Lake, and looking down upon it and the whole Vale, and its accompanying mountains, the ‘Pastor’ is supposed by me to stand, when at sunset he addresses his companions.”—I. F. MS.—ED.

"To every Form of being is assigned,"
 Thus calmly spake the venerable Sage,
 "An *active* Principle:—howe'er removed
 From sense and observation, it subsists
 In all things, in all natures; in the stars
 Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
 In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
 That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
 The moving waters, and the invisible air.
 Whate'er exists hath properties that spread
 Beyond itself, communicating good,
 A simple blessing, or with evil mixed;
 Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
 No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
 It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds.*
 This is the freedom of the universe;
 Unfolded still the more, more visible,
 The more we know; and yet is revered least,
 And least respected in the human Mind,
 Its most apparent home. The food of hope
 Is meditated action; robbed of this
 Her sole support, she languishes and dies.
 We perish also; for we live by hope
 And by desire; we see by the glad light
 And breathe the sweet air of futurity;
 And so we live, or else we have no life.
 To-morrow—nay perchance this very hour
 (For every moment hath its own¹ to-morrow!)
 Those blooming Boys, whose hearts are almost sick
 With present triumph, will be sure to find

¹ 1820.

has its own

1814.

* Compare *Tintern Abbey*, Vol. I. p. 269.

A motion or a spirit, that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things.

A field before them freshened with the dew
 Of other expectations ;—in which course
 Their happy year spins round. The youth obeys
 A like glad impulse ; and so moves the man
 'Mid all his apprehensions, cares, and fears,—
 Or so he ought to move. Ah ! why in age
 Do we revert so fondly to the walks
 Of childhood—but that there the Soul discerns
 The dear memorial footsteps unimpaired
 Of her own native vigour ; thence can hear ¹
 Reverberations ; and a choral song,
 Commingling with the incense that ascends,
 Undaunted, toward ² the imperishable heavens,
 From her own lonely altar ?

Do not think

That good and wise ever will be allowed,³
 Though strength decay, to breathe in such estate
 As shall divide them wholly from the stir
 Of hopeful nature. Rightly is it said
 That Man descends into the VALE of years ;
 Yet have I thought that we might also speak,
 And not presumptuously, I trust, of Age,
 As of a final EMINENCE ; though bare
 In aspect and forbidding, yet a point
 On which 'tis not impossible to sit
 In awful sovereignty ; a place of power,
 A throne, that ⁴ may be likened unto his,

¹ 1827.

Of her own native vigour—but for this,
 That it is given her thence in age to hear

1814.

² 1827.

Undaunted, tow'rds

1814.

³ 1832.

. will ever be allowed,

1814.

⁴ 1827.

—A Throne, which

1814.

And may it not be hoped, that, placed by age
In like removal, tranquil though severe,
We are not so removed for utter loss ;
But for some favour, suited to our need ?
What more than that the severing should confer ¹
Fresh power to commune with the invisible world,
And hear the mighty stream of tendency *
Uttering, for elevation of our thought,
A clear sonorous voice, inaudible
To the vast multitude ; whose doom it is
To run the giddy round of vain delight,
Or fret and labour on the Plain below.

But, if to such sublime ascent the hopes
Of Man may rise, as to a welcome close
And termination of his mortal course ;
Them only can such hope inspire whose minds
Have not been starved by absolute neglect ;
Nor bodies crushed by unremitting toil ;
To whom kind Nature, therefore, may afford
Proof of the sacred love she bears for all ;
Whose birthright Reason, therefore, may ensure.
For me, consulting what I feel within
In times when most existence with herself
Is satisfied, I cannot but believe,
That, far as kindly Nature hath free scope
And Reason's sway predominates ; even so far,
Country, society, and time itself,
That saps the individual's bodily frame,
And lays the generations low in dust,
Do, by the almighty Ruler's grace, partake

¹ 1827.

What more than this, that we thereby should gain 1814.

* A phrase familiarized to English ears by Mr Arnold's use of it.—ED.

Of one maternal spirit, bringing forth
 And cherishing with ever-constant love,
 That tires not, nor betrays. Our life is turned
 Out of her course, wherever man is made
 An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool
 Or implement, a passive thing employed
 As a brute mean, without acknowledgment
 Of common right or interest in the end ;
 Used or abused, as selfishness may prompt.
 Say, what can follow for a rational soul
 Perverted thus, but weakness in all good,
 And strength in evil ? Hence an after-call
 For chastisement, and custody, and bonds,
 And oft-times Death, avenger of the past,
 And the sole guardian in whose hands we dare
 Entrust the future.—Not for these sad issues
 Was Man created ; but to obey the law
 Of life, and hope, and action. And 'tis known
 That when we stand upon our native soil,
 Unelbowed by such objects as oppress
 Our active powers, those powers themselves become
 Strong to subvert our noxious qualities :
 They sweep distemper from the busy day,
 And make the chalice of the big round year
 Run o'er with gladness ;¹ whence the Being moves
 In beauty through the world ; and all who see
 Bless him, rejoicing in his neighbourhood."

¹ 1832.

They sweep away infection from the heart ;
 And, by the substitution of delight,
 Suppress all evil ;

1814.

They sweep distemper from the busy day,
 And make the vessel of the big round year
 Run o'er with gladness ;

1827.

"Then," said the Solitary, "by what force¹
 Of language shall a feeling heart express
 Her sorrow for that multitude in whom
 We look for health from seeds that have been sown
 In sickness, and for increase in a power
 That works but by extinction? On themselves
 They cannot lean, nor turn to their own hearts
 To know what they must do; their wisdom is
 To look into the eyes of others, thence
 To be instructed what they must avoid:
 Or rather, let us say, how least observed,
 How with most quiet and most silent death,
 With the least taint and injury to the air
 The oppressor breathes, their human form divine,
 And their immortal soul, may waste away."

The Sage rejoined, "I thank you—you have spared
 My voice the utterance of a keen regret,
 A wide compassion which with you I share.
 When, heretofore, I placed before your sight
 A Little-one,² subjected to the arts
 Of modern ingenuity, and made
 The senseless member of a vast machine,
 Serving as doth a spindle or a wheel;
 Think not, that, pitying him, I could forget
 The rustic Boy, who walks the fields, untaught;
 The slave of ignorance, and oft of want,
 And miserable hunger. Much, too much,
 Of this unhappy lot, in early youth

¹ 1827.

. "by what power

1814.

² 1827.

. before your sight

A most familiar object of our days,

A Little-one,

1814.

We both have witnessed, lot which I myself
 Shared, though in mild and merciful degree ;
 Yet was the mind ¹ to hindrances exposed,
 Through which I struggled, not without distress
 And sometimes injury, like a lamb enthralled ²
 'Mid thorns and brambles ; or a bird that breaks
 Through a strong net, and mounts upon the wind,
 Though with her plumes impaired. If they, whose souls
 Should open while they range the richer fields
 Of merry England, are obstructed less
 By indigence, their ignorance is not less,
 Nor less to be deplored. For who can doubt
 That tens of thousands at this day exist
 Such as the boy you painted, lineal heirs
 Of those who once were vassals of her soil,
 Following its fortunes like the beasts or trees
 Which it sustained. But no one takes delight
 In this oppression ; none are proud of it ;
 It bears no sounding name, nor ever bore ;
 A standing grievance, an indigenous vice
 Of every country under heaven. My thoughts
 Were turned to evils that are new and chosen,
 A bondage lurking under shape of good,—
 Arts, in themselves beneficent and kind,
 But all too fondly followed and too far ;—
 To victims, which the merciful can see
 Nor think that they are victims—turned to wrongs,
 By women, who have children of their own,
 Beheld without compassion, yea with praise !

¹ 1827.

Yet was my mind 1814.

² 1827.

. , like a Sheep enthralled 1814.

I spake of mischief by the wise diffused ¹
 With gladness, thinking that the more it spreads
 The healthier, the securer, we become ;
 Delusion which a moment may destroy !
 Lastly, I mourned for those whom I had seen
 Corrupted and cast down, on favoured ground,
 Where circumstance and nature had combined
 To shelter innocence, and cherish love ;
 Who, but for this intrusion, would have lived,
 Possessed of health, and strength, and peace of mind ;
 Thus would have lived, or never have been born.

Alas ! what differs more than man from man !
 And whence that difference ? whence but from himself
 For see the universal Race endowed
 With the same upright form !—The sun is fixed,
 And the infinite magnificence of heaven
 Fixed, within reach of every human eye ; ²
 The sleepless ocean murmurs for all ears ;
 The vernal field infuses fresh delight
 Into all hearts. Throughout the world of sense,
 Even as an object is sublime or fair,
 That object is laid open to the view
 Without reserve or veil ; and as a power
 Is salutary, or an influence sweet,
 Are each and all enabled to perceive
 That power, that influence, by impartial law.
 Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all ;
 Reason, and, with that reason, smiles and tears ;

¹ 1827.

Which Women who have Children of their own
 Regard without compassion, yea with praise !
 I spake of mischief which the wise diffuse

1814

² 1827.

Within the reach of every human eye ;

1814.

Imagination, freedom in the will ;
 Conscience to guide and check ; and death to be
 Foretasted, immortality conceived
 By all,—a blissful immortality,
 To them whose holiness on earth shall make
 The Spirit capable of heaven, assured.¹
 Strange, then, nor less than monstrous, might be deemed
 The failure, if the Almighty, to this point
 Liberal and undistinguishing, should hide ²
 The excellence of moral qualities
 From common understanding ; leaving truth
 And virtue, difficult, abstruse, and dark ;
 Hard to be won, and only by a few ;
 Strange, should He deal herein with nice respects,
 And frustrate all the rest ! Believe it not :
 The primal duties shine aloft—like stars ;
 The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
 Are scattered at the feet of Man—like flowers.
 The generous inclination, the just rule,
 Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure thoughts—
 No mystery is here ! Here is no boon
 For high—yet not for low ; for proudly graced—
 Yet ³ not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
 To heaven as lightly from the cottage hearth
 As from the haughtiest palace.⁴ He, whose soul

¹ 1849.

. and death to be
 Foretasted, immortality presumed.

1814.

² 1814-1849.

Bountiful and undistinguishing . . .

C.

³ 1836.

. ; no special boon
 For high and not for low, for proudly graced
 And

1814.

⁴ 1836.

As from the haughty palace.

1814.

Ponders this true equality, may walk
 The fields of earth with gratitude and hope ;
 Yet, in that meditation, will he find
 Motive to sadder grief, as we have found ;
 Lamenting ancient virtues overthrown ;
 And for the injustice grieving, that hath made
 So wide a difference between man and man.¹

Then let us rather fix our gladdened thoughts ²
 Upon the brighter scene. How blest that pair
 Of blooming Boys (whom we beheld even now)
 Blest in their several and their common lot !
 A few short hours of each returning day
 The thriving prisoners of their village-school :
 And thence let loose, to seek their pleasant homes
 Or range the grassy lawn in vacancy ;
 To breathe and to be happy, run and shout
 Idle,—but no delay, no harm, no loss ;
 For every genial power of heaven and earth,
 Through all the seasons of the changeful year,
 Obsequiously doth take upon herself
 To labour for them ; bringing each in turn
 The tribute of enjoyment, knowledge, health,
 Beauty, or strength ! Such privilege is theirs,
 Granted alike in the outset of their course
 To both ; and, if that partnership must cease,
 I grieve not,” to the Pastor here he turned,
 “ Much as I glory in that child of yours,
 Repine not for his cottage-comrade, whom
 Belike no higher destiny awaits

¹ 1836.

. betwixt Man and Man.

1814.

² 1836.

But let us rather fix our gladdened thoughts

1814.

“But let us rather turn our gladdened thoughts

1827.

Than the old hereditary wish fulfilled ;
 The wish for liberty to live—content
 With what Heaven grants, and die—in peace of mind,
 Within the bosom of his native vale.
 At least, whatever fate the noon of life
 Reserves for either, sure it is that both ¹
 Have been permitted to enjoy the dawn ;
 Whether regarded as a jocund time,
 That in itself may terminate, or lead
 In course of nature to a sober eve.
 Both have been fairly dealt with ; looking back
 They will allow that justice has in them
 Been shown, alike to body and to mind.”

He paused, as if revolving in his soul
 Some weighty matter ; then, with fervent voice
 And an impassioned majesty, exclaimed—

“ O for the coming of that glorious time
 When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
 And best protection, this imperial Realm,
 While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
 An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
 Them who are born to serve her and obey ;
 Binding herself by statute * to secure
 For all the children whom her soil maintains
 The rudiments of letters, and inform ²
 The mind with moral and religious truth,
 Both understood and practised,—so that none,
 However destitute, be left to droop

¹ 1836.

. . . . , this is sure, that both

1814.

² 1827.

. . . . , and to inform

1814.

* See Wordsworth's note, p. 414. Compulsory Elementary Education
 was secured to Scotland by the Education Act of 1872, and to England by
 the Act of 1880.—ED.

By timely culture unsustained ; or run
 Into a wild disorder ; or be forced
 To drudge through a weary life without the help ¹
 Of intellectual implements and tools ;
 A savage horde among the civilised,
 A servile band among the lordly free !
 This sacred right, the lisping babe proclaims ²
 To be inherent in him, by Heaven's will,
 For the protection of his innocence ;
 And the rude boy—who, having overpast
 The sinless age, by conscience is enrolled,
 Yet mutinously knits his angry brow,
 And lifts his wilful hand on mischief bent,
 Or turns the godlike faculty of speech ³
 To impious use—by process indirect
 Declares his due, while he makes known his need.
 —This sacred right is fruitlessly announced,
 This universal plea in vain addressed,
 To eyes and ears of parents who themselves
 Did, in the time of their necessity,
 Urge it in vain ; and, therefore, like a prayer
 That from the humblest floor ascends to heaven,
 It mounts to reach the State's parental ear ;
 Who, if indeed she own a mother's heart,
 And be not most unfeelingly devoid
 Of gratitude to Providence, will grant
 The unquestionable good—which, England, safe

¹ 1836.

To drudge through weary life without the aid

1814.

² 1827.

This right, as sacred almost as the right
 To exist and be supplied with sustenance
 And means of life, the lisping Babe proclaims

1814.

³ 1827.

. . . . sacred faculty of speech

1814.

From interference of external force,
 May grant at leisure; without risk incurred
 That what in wisdom for herself she doth,
 Others shall e'er be able to undo.

Look! and behold, from Calpe's sunburnt cliffs *
 To the flat margin of the Baltic sea,
 Long-reverenced titles cast away as weeds;
 Laws overturned; and territory split,
 Like fields of ice rent by the polar wind,
 And forced to join in less obnoxious shapes
 Which,¹ ere they gain consistence, by a gust
 Of the same breath are shattered and destroyed.
 Meantime the sovereignty of these fair Isles
 Remains entire and indivisible:
 And, if that ignorance were removed, which breeds²
 Within the compass of their several shores
 Dark discontent, or loud commotion, each
 Might still preserve³ the beautiful repose
 Of heavenly bodies shining in their spheres.
 —The discipline of slavery is unknown
 Among us,⁴—hence the more do we require
 The discipline of virtue; order else
 Cannot subsist, nor confidence, nor peace.
 Thus, duties rising out of good possest,
 And prudent caution needful to avert

¹ 1814.

That 1842.
 1845 returns to 1814.

² 1827.

., which acts 1814.

³ 1827.

To breed commotion and disquietude,
 Each might preserve 1814.

⁴ 1836.

Amongst us,— 1814.

* A promontory in Valencia, facing the Balearic isles.—ED.

Impending evil, equally require
 That the whole people should be taught and trained.¹
 So shall licentiousness and black resolve
 Be rooted out, and virtuous habits take
 Their place ; and genuine piety descend,
 Like an inheritance, from age to age.

With such foundations laid, avaunt the fear
 Of numbers crowded on their native soil,
 To the prevention of all healthful growth
 Through mutual injury ! Rather in the law
 Of increase and the mandate from above
 Rejoice !—and ye have special cause for joy.
 —For, as the element of air affords
 An easy passage to the industrious bees
 Fraught with their burthens ; and a way as smooth
 For those ordained to take their sounding flight
 From the thronged hive, and settle where they list
 In fresh abodes—their labour to renew ;
 So the wide waters, open to the power,
 The will, the instincts, and appointed needs
 Of Britain, do invite her to cast off
 Her swarms, and in succession send them forth ;
 Bound to establish new communities
 On every shore whose aspect favours hope
 Or bold adventure ; promising to skill
 And perseverance their deserved reward.

Yes," he continued, kindling as he spake,
 " Change wide, and deep, and silently performed,

¹ 1827.

. do alike require
 That permanent provision should be made
 For the whole people to be taught and trained.

This Land shall witness ; and as days roll on,
 Earth's universal frame shall feel the effect ;
 Even till the smallest habitable rock,
 Beaten by lonely billows, hear the songs
 Of humanised society ; and bloom
 With civil arts, that shall breathe forth their fragrance,¹
 A grateful tribute to all-ruling Heaven.
 From culture, unexclusively bestowed
 On Albion's noble Race in freedom born,²
 Expect these mighty issues : from the pains
 And faithful care³ of unambitious schools
 Instructing simple childhood's ready ear :
 Thence look for these magnificent results !
 —Vast the circumference of hope—and ye
 Are at its centre, British Lawgivers ;
 Ah ! sleep not there in shame ! Shall Wisdom's voice
 From out the bosom of these troubled times
 Repeat the dictates of her calmer mind,
 And shall the venerable halls ye fill
 Refuse to echo the sublime decree ?
 Trust not to partial care a general good ;
 Transfer not to futurity a work
 Of urgent need.—Your Country must complete
 Her glorious destiny. Begin even now,
 Now, when oppression, like the Egyptian plague

¹ 1849.

With civil arts, and send their fragrance forth, 1814.
 With civil arts, that send their fragrance forth, 1827.

² 1827.

From Culture, universally bestowed.
 On Britain's noble Race in freedom born ;
 From Education, from that humble source, 1814.

³ 1827.

And quiet care 1814.

Of darkness, stretched o'er guilty Europe,* makes
 The brightness more conspicuous that invests
 The happy Island where ye think and act ;
 Now, when destruction is a prime pursuit,
 Show to the wretched nations for what end
 The powers of civil polity were given."

Abruptly here, but with a graceful air,
 The Sage broke off. No sooner had he ceased
 Than, looking forth, the gentle Lady said,
 " Behold the shades of afternoon have fallen
 Upon this flowery slope ; and see—beyond—
 The silvery lake is streaked with placid blue ;¹
 As if preparing for the peace of evening.†
 How temptingly the landscape shines ! The air
 Breathes invitation ; easy is the walk
 To the lake's margin, where a boat lies moored
 Under a sheltering tree." ²—Upon this hint
 We rose together ; all were pleased ; but most
 The beauteous girl, whose cheek was flushed with joy.
 Light as a sunbeam glides along the hills
 She vanished—eager to impart the scheme
 To her loved brother and his shy compeer.
 —Now was there bustle in the Vicar's house
 And earnest preparation.—Forth we went,
 And down the vale along the streamlet's edge ³

¹ 1836.

The Lake though bright, is of a placid blue ; 1814.

² 1849.

Beneath her sheltering tree." 1814.

³ 1827.

And down the Valley on the Streamlet's bank 1814.

* The reference is to Napoleon Buonaparte, and his designs of conquest, 'oppression,' and 'destruction.'—Ed.

† See note †, p. 381.—Ed.

Pursued our way, a broken company,
Mute or conversing, single or in pairs.
Thus having reached a bridge, that overarched
The hasty rivulet where it lay becalmed
In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
A two-fold image ; on a grassy bank
A snow-white ram, and in the crystal flood
Another and the same ! Most beautiful,
On the green turf, with his imperial front
Shaggy and bold, and wreathèd horns superb,
The breathing creature stood ; as beautiful,
Beneath him, shewed his shadowy counterpart.
Each had his glowing mountains, each his sky,
And each seemed centre of his own fair world :
Antipodes unconscious of each other,
Yet, in partition, with their several spheres,
Blended in perfect stillness, to our sight ! *

“ Ah ! what a pity were it to disperse,
Or to disturb, so fair a spectacle,
And yet a breath can do it ! ”

These few words
The Lady whispered, while we stood and gazed
Gathered together, all in still delight,
Not without awe. Thence passing on, she said
In like low voice to my particular ear,
“ I love to hear that eloquent old Man
Pour forth his meditations, and descant
On human life from infancy to age.
How pure his spirit ! in what vivid hues
His mind gives back the various forms of things,

* Compare *Yarrow Revisited*—

“ The swan on still St Mary’s lake
Floats double, swan and shadow.”

Caught in their fairest, happiest, attitude !
 While he is speaking, I have power to see
 Even as he sees ; but when his voice hath ceased,
 Then, with a sigh, sometimes I feel, as now,¹
 That combinations so serene and bright
 Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
 Whose highest beauty, beautiful as it is,
 Like that reflected in yon quiet pool,
 Seems but a fleeting sun-beam's gift, whose peace,
 The sufferance only of a breath of air ! ”²

More had she said—but sportive shouts were heard
 Sent from the jocund hearts of those two Boys,
 Who, bearing each a basket on his arm,
 Down the green field came tripping after us.
 With caution we embarked ; and now the pair
 For prouder service were addrest ; but each,
 Wishful to leave an opening for my choice,
 Dropped the light oar his eager hand had seized.
 Thanks given for that becoming courtesy,

¹ 1832.

. I sometimes feel, as now, 1814.

² 1849.

. so serene and bright ;
 Like those reflected in yon quiet Pool,
 Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
 To great and small disturbances exposed.” 1814.

. so serene and bright ;
 Like those reflected in yon quiet pool
 Cannot be lasting in a world whose pleasure
 (And whose best beauty, beautiful as it is)
 Seems but a fleeting sun-beam's gift, whose peace
 The sufferance only of a breath of air ! ” 1836.

. so serene and bright
 Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
 One whose best beauty, beautiful as it is,
 Like that reflected in yon quiet pool
 Seems but a fleeting sun-beam's gift, whose peace
 The sufferance only of a breath of air ! ” 1841.

Their place I took—and for a grateful office¹
 Pregnant with recollections of the time
 When, on thy bosom, spacious Windermere !*
 A youth, I practised this delightful art ;
 Tossed on the waves alone, or 'mid a crew
 Of joyous comrades. Soon as the reedy marge
 Was cleared, I dipped, with arms accordant, oars²
 Free from obstruction ; and the boat advanced
 Through crystal water, smoothly as a hawk,
 That, disentangled from the shady boughs
 Of some thick wood, her place of covert, cleaves
 With correspondent wings the abyss of air.
 —“ Observe,” the Vicar said, “ yon rocky isle
 With birch-trees fringed;† my hand shall guide the helm,
 While thitherward we shape our course ; or while³
 We seek that other, on the western shore ;
 Where the bare columns of those lofty firs,†

¹ 1836.

—When we had cautiously embarked, the Pair
 Now for a prouder service were address ;
 But an inexorable law forbade,
 And each resigned the oar which he had seized.
 Whereat, with willing hand I undertook
 The needful labour ; grateful task !—to me

1814.

² 1836.

. now the reedy marge
 Cleared, with a strenuous arm I dipped the oar,

1814.

³ 1836.

. we bend our course ; or while

1814.

* Compare *The Prelude*, Book II. (Vol. III. p. 154)—

“ When summer came

Our pastime was, on bright half-holidays,
 To sweep along the plain of Windermere
 With rival oars ;”

—ED.

† Dr Cradock writes: “ The Lake is of course, in the main, that of Grasmere, ‘ the grassy mountain’s open side ’ being avowedly Loughrigg Terrace. But, according to Wordsworth’s habit, he has drawn his imagery from various other places—as the island of Grasmere is not ‘ with birch-trees fringed.’ (This may well refer to Rydal.) Again, I know of no ‘ lilies of the vale ’ at

Supporting gracefully a massy dome
Of sombre foliage, seem to imitate
A Grecian temple rising from the Deep."

"Turn where we may," said I, "we cannot err
In this delicious region."—Cultured slopes,
Wild tracts of forest-ground, and scattered groves,
And mountains bare, or clothed with ancient woods,
Surrounded us ; and, as we held our way
Along the level of the glassy flood,
They ceased not to surround us ; change of place
From kindred features diversely combined,
Producing change of beauty ever new.*
—Ah ! that such beauty, varying in the light
Of living nature, cannot be portrayed
By words, nor by the pencil's silent skill ;
But is the property of him alone
Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,
And in his mind recorded it with love !
Suffice it, therefore, if the rural Muse
Vouchsafe sweet influence, while her Poet speaks
Of trivial occupations well devised,

Grasmere, but they are found, I believe, on one of the islands of Windermere, certainly in woods near the river Leven, below that lake. Again, the vicar refers to 'two islands' on the lake, but Grasmere has only one. I never saw a goat 'browsing by dashing waterfalls,' still less 'spotted deer' on or near Grasmere."

It seems to me that the description refers, first to Rydal lake, and then to Grasmere. The company descend, as will be seen, along a streamlet to a bridge, where they see a ram reflected in the water. They then go into a boat, and sail to the 'rocky isle with birch-trees fringed.' This cannot refer to the island in Grasmere, but it *may* refer to the larger one in Rydal. Even the 'dashing waterfall' may be the small one in the beck that descends between Nab Scar and White Moss Common. But if this be correct, and if the whole party are supposed to ascend Loughrigg terrace later on, proceeding to a point whence they can view the vale of Grasmere, there are still some difficulties in localising the details.—Ed.

* This reference to the "change of beauty ever new" seems to make it clear that the terrace walks on Loughrigg are referred to.—Ed.

And unsought pleasures springing up by chance ;
 As if some friendly Genius had ordained
 That, as the day thus far had been enriched
 By acquisition of sincere delight,
 The same should be continued to its close.

One spirit animating old and young,
 A gipsy-fire we kindled on the shore
 Of the fair Isle with birch-trees fringed—and there,
 Merrily seated in a ring, partook
 A choice repast—served by our young companions
 With rival earnestness and kindred glee.¹
 Launched from our hands the smooth stone skimmed the
 lake ;
 With shouts we raised the echoes ; ²—stiller sounds
 The lovely Girl supplied—a simple song,
 Whose low tones reached not to the distant rocks
 To be repeated thence,³ but gently sank
 Into our hearts ; and charmed the peaceful flood.
 Rapaciously we gathered flowery spoils
 From land and water ; lilies of each hue—
 Golden and white, that float upon the waves,
 And court the wind ; and leaves of that shy plant,
 (Her flowers were shed) the lily of the vale,*
 That loves the ground, and from the sun withholds
 Her pensive beauty ; from the breeze her sweets.

¹ 1836.

. partook
 The beverage drawn from China's fragrant herb. 1814.

² 1836.

With shouts we roused the echoes. 1814.

³ 1827.

To be repeated there, 1814.

* Compare *The Prelude*, Book II. (Vol. III. p. 155)—

“ a sister isle
 Beneath the oaks' umbrageous covert, sown
 With lilies of the valley like a field.”

Such product, and such pastime, did the place
 And season yield ; but, as we re-embarked,
 Leaving, in quest of other scenes, the shore
 Of that wild spot, the Solitary said
 In a low voice, yet careless who might hear,
 " The fire that burned so brightly to our wish,
 Where is it now ? deserted on the beach—
 Dying, or dead ;¹ Nor shall the fanning breeze
 Revive its ashes. What care we for this,
 Whose ends are gained ? Behold an emblem here
 Of one day's pleasure, and all mortal joys !
 And, in this unpremeditated slight
 Of that which is no longer needed, see
 The common course of human gratitude ! "

This plaintive note disturbed not the repose
 Of the still evening. Right across the lake
 Our pinnacle moves ; then, coasting creek and bay,
 Glades, we behold, and into thickets peep,
 Where couch the spotted deer ;* or raise our eyes
 To shaggy steeps on which the careless goat
 Browsed by the side of dashing waterfalls ;†
 And thus the bark, meandering with the shore
 Pursued her voyage till a natural pier
 Of jutting rock invited us to land.²

¹ 1836.

It seems extinct ; 1814.

² 1836.Thus did the Bark, meandering with the shore,
 Pursue her voyage, till a point was gained
 Where a projecting line of rock, that framed
 A natural pier, invited us to land. 1814.Thus did the bark, meandering with the shore,
 Pursue her voyage, till a natural pier
 Of jutting rock invited us to land. 1827.

* See note, p. 382.—Ed.

† See note, p. 382.—Ed.

Alert to follow as the Pastor led,
 We clomb a green hill's side;* and, as we clomb,
 The Valley, opening out her bosom, gave
 Fair prospect, intercepted less and less,¹
 O'er the flat meadows² and indented coast
 Of the smooth lake,³ in compass seen:—far off,
 And yet conspicuous, stood the old Church-tower,†
 In majesty presiding over fields
 And habitations seemingly preserved⁴
 From all intrusion of the restless world⁵
 By rocks impassable and mountains huge.

Soft heath this elevated spot supplied,
 And choice of moss-clad stones, whereon we couched
 Or sate reclined; admiring quietly
 The general aspect of the scene; but each
 Not seldom over anxious to make known⁶
 His own discoveries; or to favourite points

¹ 1827. We clomb a green hill's side; and thence obtained,
 Slowly, a less and less obstructed sight 1814.

² 1826. Of the flat meadows, 1814.

³ 1827. Of the whole lake— 1814.

⁴ 1827. presiding o'er the Vale
 And all her Dwellings; seemingly preserved 1814.

⁵ 1849. From the intrusion of a restless world 1814.

⁶ 1827. With resting-place of mossy stone;—and there
 We sate reclined—admiring quietly
 The frame and general aspect of the scene;
 And each not seldom eager to make known 1814.

* Loughrigg.—Ed.

† Of Grasmere.—Ed.

Directing notice, merely from a wish
 To impart a joy, imperfect while unshared.
 That rapturous moment never shall I forget ¹
 When these particular interests were effaced
 From every mind!—Already had the sun,
 Sinking with less than ordinary state,
 Attained his western bound; but rays of light—
 Now suddenly diverging from the orb
 Retired behind the mountain tops or veiled
 By the dense air—shot upwards to the crown
 Of the blue firmament—aloft, and wide:
 And multitudes of little floating clouds,
 Through their ethereal texture pierced—ere we,
 Who saw, of change were conscious—had become ²
 Vivid as fire; clouds separately poised,—
 Innumerable multitude of forms
 Scattered through half the circle of the sky;
 And giving back, and shedding each on each,
 With prodigal communion, the bright hues
 Which from the unapparent fount of glory
 They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.
 That which the heavens displayed, the liquid deep
 Repeated; but with unity sublime!

While from the grassy mountain's open side *
 We gazed, in silence hushed, with eyes intent

¹ 1836.

. ne'er shall I forget 1814.

² 1836.Pierced through their thin ethereal mould, ere we,
 Who saw, of change were conscious; had become 1814.Ere we, who saw, of change were conscious, pierced
 Through their ethereal texture, had become 1827.

* Loughrigg Fell. See the Fenwick note, p. 12, and p. 385, line 2.—ED.

On the refulgent spectacle, diffused
Through earth, sky, water, and all visible space,
The Priest in holy transport thus exclaimed:

“Eternal Spirit! universal God!
Power inaccessible to human thought,
Save by degrees and steps which thou hast deigned
To furnish; for this effluence of thyself,¹
To the infirmity of mortal sense
Vouchsafed; this local transitory type
Of thy paternal splendours, and the pomp
Of those who fill thy courts in highest heaven,
The radiant Cherubim;—accept the thanks
Which we, thy humble Creatures, here convened,
Presume to offer; we, who—from the breast
Of the frail earth, permitted to behold
The faint reflections only of thy face—
Are yet exalted, and in soul adore!
Such as they are who in thy presence stand
Unsullied, incorruptible, and drink
Imperishable majesty streamed forth
From thy empyreal throne, the elect of earth
Shall be—divested at the appointed hour
Of all dishonour, cleansed from mortal stain.
—Accomplish, then, their number; and conclude
Time’s weary course! Or if, by thy decree,
The consummation that will come by stealth
Be yet far distant, let thy Word prevail,
Oh! let thy Word prevail, to take away
The sting of human nature. Spread the law,
As it is written in thy holy book,
Throughout all lands; let every nation hear

¹ 1827.

The high behest, and every heart obey ;
Both for the love of purity, and hope
Which it affords, to such as do thy will
And persevere in good, that they shall rise,
To have a nearer view of thee, in heaven.
—Father of good ! this prayer in bounty grant,
In mercy grant it, to thy wretched sons.
Then, nor till then, shall persecution cease,
And cruel wars expire. The way is marked,
The guide appointed, and the ransom paid.
Alas ! the nations, who of yore received
These tidings, and in Christian temples meet
The sacred truth to acknowledge, linger still ;
Preferring bonds and darkness to a state
Of holy freedom, by redeeming love
Proffered to all, while yet on earth detained.

So fare the many ; and the thoughtful few,
Who in the anguish of their souls bewail
This dire perverseness, cannot choose but ask,
Shall it endure ?—Shall enmity and strife,
Falsehood and guile, be left to sow their seed ;
And the kind never perish ? Is the hope
Fallacious, or shall righteousness obtain
A peaceable dominion, wide as earth,
And ne'er to fail ? Shall that blest day arrive
When they, whose choice or lot it is to dwell
In crowded cities, without fear shall live
Studious of mutual benefit ; and he,
Whom Morn awakens, among dews and flowers¹
Of every clime, to till the lonely field,

¹ 1836.

Whom morning wakes, among sweet dews and flowers

Be happy in himself?—The law of faith
 Working through love, such conquest shall it gain,
 Such triumph over sin and guilt achieve?
 Almighty Lord, thy further grace impart!
 And with that help the wonder shall be seen
 Fulfilled, the hope accomplished; and thy praise
 Be sung with transport and unceasing joy.

Once," and with mild demeanour, as he spake,
 On us the venerable Pastor turned
 His beaming eye that had been raised to Heaven,
 "Once,¹ while the Name, Jehovah, was a sound
 Within the circuit of this sea-girt isle
 Unheard, the savage nations bowed the head²
 To Gods delighting in remorseless deeds;
 Gods which themselves had fashioned, to promote
 Ill purposes, and flatter foul desires.
 Then, in the bosom of yon mountain-cove,*
 To those inventions of corrupted man
 Mysterious rites were solemnised; and there—
 Amid impending rocks and gloomy woods—
 Of those terrific Idols some received³
 Such dismal service, that the loudest voice
 Of the swoln cataracts (which now are heard
 Soft murmuring) was too weak to overcome,

¹ 1827.

. and unceasing joy.
 Once,

1814.

² 1827.

. bowed their heads

1814.

³ 1827.

Of those dread Idols, some, perchance, received

1814.

* The reference may be to the crater-like recess or "cove," on Helm Crag, or to the more distant recesses of Easedale.—ED.

Though aided by wild winds, the groans and shrieks
 Of human victims, offered up to appease
 Or to propitiate. And, if living eyes
 Had visionary faculties to see
 The thing that hath been as the thing that is,
 Aghast we might behold this crystal Mere¹
 Bedimmed with smoke, in wreaths voluminous,
 Flung from the body of devouring fires,
 To Taranis erected * on the heights
 By priestly hands, for sacrifice performed
 Exultingly, in view of open day
 And full assemblage of a barbarous host;
 Or to Andates, female Power,† who gave
 (For so they fancied) glorious victory.
 —A few rude monuments of mountain-stone
 Survive; all else is swept away.—How bright

¹ 1827.

this spacious Mere

1814.

* A name of Jupiter among the Druids in Gaul. Toland, in his *History of the Druids* (p. 247), gives a list of the *Dii Gallorum*, beginning with *Taranis* and ending with *Adraste* or *Andate*. And, in an edition of Toland's *History*, edited with elaborate notes by R. Huddleston, school-master, Lunan, and published at Montrose in 1814, I find the following, p. 357:—"Taramis, or Taranis, is the Gaelic Taran, or Tharan, i.e., 'thunder.' This God is the same with the Grecian Zeus, or the Roman Jupiter. By this Deity the Celts understood Baal. Taranis, or Tharanis, is sometimes written Tanaris, or Thanaris, which bears a great affinity to the English *thunder*, the German *Donder*, and the Roman *Tonitru*. Lucan mentions him (Lib. 1) in these words—

Et Taranis Scythicæ non mitior ara Dianæ.

From the Celts the Germans borrowed Tharanis, and by abbreviation formed their God *Thor*, whence Thursday, the same as the Roman *Dies Jovis*."—ED.

† The same editor of Toland's book on the Druids, whose comment on Taranis is given in the previous note, writes thus of *Adraste*, or *Andate*, p. 359:—"Respecting this goddess there has been difference of opinion. The Greeks considered her as *Nemesis*, or the goddess of revenge. . . . There can be little doubt that the goddess here meant is the Phœnician *Ashtareth*, or *Astarte*, i.e., the moon."—ED.

The appearances of things ! From such, how changed
The existing worship ; and with those compared,
The worshippers how innocent and blest !
So wide the difference, a willing mind
Might almost think, at this affecting hour,¹
That paradise, the lost abode of man,
Was raised again : and to a happy few,
In its original beauty, here restored.

Whence but from thee, the true and only God,
And from the faith derived through Him who bled
Upon the cross, this marvellous advance
Of good from evil ; as if one extreme
Were left, the other gained.—O ye, who come
To kneel devoutly in yon reverend Pile,*
Called to such office by the peaceful sound
Of sabbath-bells ; and ye, who sleep in earth,
All cares forgotten, round its hallowed walls !
For you, in presence of this little band
Gathered together on the green hill-side,
Your Pastor is emboldened to prefer
Vocal thanksgivings to the eternal King ;
Whose love, whose counsel, whose commands, have made
Your very poorest rich in peace of thought
And in good works ; and him, who is endowed
With scantiest knowledge, master of all truth
Which the salvation of his soul requires.
Conscious of that abundant favour showered
On you, the children of my humble care,
And this dear land, our country, while on earth

¹ 1836.

At this affecting hour, might almost think

1814.

We sojourn, have I lifted up my soul,
 Joy giving voice to fervent gratitude.¹
 These barren rocks, your stern inheritance :
 These fertile fields, that recompense your pains ;
 The shadowy vale, the sunny mountain-top ;
 Woods waving in the wind their lofty heads,
 Or hushed ; the roaring waters, and the still—²
 They see the offering of my lifted hands,
 They hear my lips present their sacrifice,
 They know if I be silent, morn or even : *
 For, though in whispers speaking, the full heart
 Will find a vent ; and thought is praise to him,
 Audible praise, to thee, omniscient Mind,
 From whom all gifts descend, all blessings flow ! ”

This vesper-service closed, without delay,
 From that exalted station to the plain
 Descending, we pursued our homeward course,
 In mute composure, o’er the shadowy lake,
 Under³ a faded sky. No trace remained
 Of those celestial splendours ; grey the vault—
 Pure, cloudless, ether ; and the star of eve
 Was wanting ; but inferior lights appeared

¹ 1827.

On your Abodes, and this beloved Land,
 Our birth-place, home, and country, while on Earth
 We sojourn,—loudly do I utter thanks
 With earnest joy, that will not be suppressed. 1814.

² 1827.

. or the still ; 1814. ✓

³ 1836.

Beneath 1814.

* Compare Milton—

“ Witness if I be silent, morn or even.”

—*Par. Lost*, V. l. 202.—ED.

Faintly, too faint almost for sight ; and some
 Above the darkened hills stood boldly forth
 In twinkling lustre, ere the boat attained
 Her mooring place ; where, to the sheltering tree,
 Our youthful Voyagers bound fast her prow,
 With prompt yet careful hands. This done, we paced
 The dewy fields ; but ere the Vicar's door
 Was reached, the Solitary checked his steps ;
 Then, intermingling thanks, on each bestowed
 A farewell salutation ; and, the like
 Receiving, took the slender path that leads
 To the one cottage in the lonely dell :*
 But turned not without welcome promise made¹
 That he would share the pleasures and pursuits
 Of yet another summer's day,† not loth
 To wander with us through the fertile vales,²
 And o'er the mountain-wastes. " Another sun,"
 Said he, " shall shine upon us, ere we part ;
 Another sun, and peradventure more ;
 If time, with free consent, be yours to give,³
 And season favours."

To enfeebled Power,
 From this communion with uninjured Minds,

¹ 1849.

. in the lonely dell,
 His chosen residence. But ere he turned
 Aside, a welcome promise had been given, 1814.
 But turned not without welcome promise given, 1827.

² 1849.

Of yet another summer's day, consumed
 In wandering with us through the Vallies fair, 1814.

³ 1814.

. is yours to give 1827.
 1849 returns to 1814.

* At Blea tarn.—ED.

† See the Fenwick note, p. 13.—ED.

What renovation had been brought ; and what
Degree of healing to a wounded spirit,
Dejected, and habitually disposed
To seek, in degradation of the Kind,
Excuse and solace for her own defects ;
How far those erring notions were reformed ;
And whether aught, of tendency as good
And pure, from further intercourse ensued ;
This—if delightful hopes, as heretofore,
Inspire the serious song, and gentle hearts
Cherish, and lofty Minds approve the past—
My future labours may not leave untold.

NOTES.

The following are the notes which Wordsworth added to *The Excursion* in the edition of 1814. In the case of the second, it will be observed that it was enlarged in the edition of 1820. In other respects these "notes" remained unaltered throughout the editions, from 1814 to 1849. I have not thought it necessary to indicate the few, and very slight, changes in the phraseology of separate sentences. —ED.

Preface, page 21.

*"Descend, prophetic Spirit, that inspirest
The human soul," &c.*

"Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic Soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come."

—*Shakespeare's Sonnets.* 1814.

Page 39.

" — much did he see of men."

In Heron's Tour in Scotland is given an intelligent account of the qualities by which this class of men used to be, and still are in some degree, distinguished, and of the benefits which society derives from their labours. Among their characteristics, he does not omit to mention that, from being obliged to pass so much of their time in solitary wandering among rural objects, they frequently acquire meditative habits of mind, and are strongly disposed to enthusiasm poetical and religious. I regret that I have not the book at hand to quote the passage, as it is interesting on many accounts. 1814.

At the risk of giving a shock to the prejudices of artificial society, I have ever been ready to pay homage to the aristocracy of nature; under a conviction that vigorous human-heartedness is the constituent principle of true taste. It may still, however, be satisfactory to have prose testimony how far a Character, employed for purposes of imagination, is founded upon general fact. I, therefore, subjoin an extract from an author who had opportunities of being well acquainted with a class of men, from whom my own personal knowledge emboldened me to draw this portrait.

"We learn from Cæsar and other Roman Writers, that the travelling merchants who frequented Gaul and other barbarous countries, either newly conquered by the Roman arms, or bordering on the Roman conquests, were ever the first to make the inhabitants of those countries familiarly acquainted with the Roman modes of life, and to inspire them with an inclination to follow the Roman fashions, and to enjoy Roman conveniences. In North America, travelling merchants from the Settlements have done and continue to do much more towards civilising the Indian natives, than all the missionaries, papist or protestant, who have ever been sent among them.

"It is farther to be observed, for the credit of this most useful class of men, that they commonly contribute, by their personal manners, no less than by the sale of their wares, to the refinement of the people among whom they travel. Their dealings form them to great quickness of wit and acuteness of judgment. Having constant occasion to recommend themselves and their goods, they acquire habits of the most obliging attention, and the most insinuating address. As in their peregrinations they have opportunity of contemplating the manners of various men and various cities, they become eminently skilled in the knowledge of the world. *As they wander, each alone, through thinly-inhabited districts they form habits of reflection and of sublime contemplation.* With all these qualifications, no wonder, that they should often be, in remote parts of the country, the best mirrors of fashion, and censors of manners; and should contribute much to polish the roughness, and soften the rusticity of our peasantry. It is not more than twenty or thirty years since a young man going from any part of Scotland to England, of purpose to *carry the pack*, was considered as going to lead the life and acquire the fortune of a gentleman. When, after twenty years' absence, in that honourable line of employment, he returned with his acquisitions to his native country, he was regarded as a gentleman to all intents and purposes."—*Heron's Journey in Scotland*, Vol. I. p. 89. 1820.

Page 110.

"*Lost in unsearchable Eternity!*"

Since this paragraph was composed, I have read with so much pleasure, in Burnet's Theory of the Earth, a passage expressing corresponding sentiments, excited by objects of a similar nature, that I cannot forbear to transcribe it.

"Siquid verò Natura nobis dedit spectaculum, in hâc tellure, verè gratum, et philosopho dignum, id semel mihi contigisse arbitror; cùm ex celsissimâ rupe speculabundus ad oram maris Mediterranei, hinc æquor cæruleum, illinc tractus Alpinos prospexi; nihil quidem magis dispar aut dissimile, nec in suo genere, magis egregium et singulare. Hoc theatrum ego facillè prætulerim Romanis cunctis, Græcisve; atque

id quod natura hîc spectandum exhibet, scenicis ludis omnibus, aut amphitheatri certaminibus. Nihil hîc elegans aut venustum, sed ingens et magnificum, et quod placet magnitudine suâ et quâdam specie immensitatis. Hinc intuebar maris æquabilem superficiem, usque et usque diffusam, quantum maximùm oculorum acies ferri potuit; illinc disruptissimam terræ faciem, et vastas moles variè elevatas aut depressas, erectas, propendentes, reclinatas, coacervatas, omni situ inæquali et turbido. Placuit, ex hâc parte, Naturæ unitas et simplicitas, et inexhausta quædam planities; ex alterâ, multiformis confusio magnorum corporum, et insanæ rerum strages: quas cùm intuebar, non urbis alicujus aut oppidi, sed confracti mundi rudera, ante oculos habere mihi visus sum.

"In singulis ferè montibus erat aliquid insolens et mirabile, sed præcæteris mihi placebat illa, quâ sedebam, rupes; erat maxima et altissima, et quâ terram respiciebat, molliori ascensu altitudinem suam dissimulabat: quâ verò mare, horrendum præceps, et quasi ad perpendicularum facta, instar parietis. Præterea facies illa marina adeò erat lævis ac uniformis (quod in rupibus aliquando observare licet) ac si scissa fuisset à summo ad imum, in illo plano; vel terræ motu aliquo, aut fulmine, divulsa.

"Ima pars rupis erat cava, recessusque habuit, et saxeos specus, euntes in vacuum montem; sive naturâ pridem factos, sive exesos mari, et undarum crebris ictibus: In hos enim cum impetu ruebant et fragore, æstuantis maris fluctus; quos iterum spumantes reddidit antrum, et quasi ab imo ventre evomuit.

"Dextrum latus montis erat præruptum, aspero saxo et nudâ caute; sinistrum non adeò neglexerat Natura, arboribus utpote ornatum: et prope pedem montis rivus limpidæ aquæ prorupit; qui cùm vicinam vallem irrigaverat, lento motu serpens, et per varios mæandros, quasi ad protrahendam vitam, in magno mari absorptus subito periit. Denique in summo vertice promontorii, commodè eminebat saxum, cui insidebam contemplabundus. Vale augusta sedes, Rege digna: Augusta rupes, semper mihi memoranda!" P. 89. *Telluris Theoria sacra, &c. Editio secunda.* 1814.

Page 141.

"Of Mississippi, or that Northern Stream."

"A man is supposed to improve by going out into the *World*, by visiting *London*. Artificial man does; he extends with his sphere; but, alas! that sphere is microscopic; it is formed of minutiae, and he surrenders his genuine vision to the artist, in order to embrace it in his ken. His bodily senses grow acute, even to barren and inhuman pruriency; while his mental become proportionally obtuse. The reverse is the Man of Mind: he who is placed in the sphere of Nature and of God, might be a mock at Tattersall's and Brooks's, and a

sneer at St James's : he would certainly be swallowed alive by the first *Pizarro* that crossed him:—But when he walks along the river of Amazons ; when he rests his eye on the unrivalled Andes ; when he measures the long and watered savannah ; or contemplates, from a sudden promontory, the distant, vast Pacific—and feels himself a free-man in this vast theatre, and commanding each ready produced fruit of this wilderness, and each progeny of this stream—his exaltation is not less than imperial. He is as gentle, too, as he is great : his emotions of tenderness keep pace with his elevation of sentiment ; for he says, ‘These were made by a good Being, who, unsought by me, placed me here to enjoy them.’ He becomes at once a child and a king. His mind is in himself ; from hence he argues, and from hence he acts, and he argues unerringly, and acts magisterially: his mind in himself is also in his God ; and therefore he loves, and therefore he soars.”—From the notes upon the *The Hurricane*, a Poem, by *William Gilbert*.

The Reader, I am sure, will thank me for the above quotation, which, though from a strange book, is one of the finest passages of modern English prose. 1814.

Page 151.

“ ’Tis, by comparison, an easy task
Earth to despise,” &c.

See, upon this subject, Baxter’s most interesting review of his own opinions and sentiments in the decline of life. It may be found (lately reprinted) in Dr Wordsworth’s *Ecclesiastical Biography*. 1814.

Page 153.

“ Alas ! the endowment of immortal Power,
Is matched unequally with custom, time,” &c.

This subject is treated at length in the Ode—*Intimations of Immortality*. 1814.

Page 158.

“ Knowing the heart of Man is set to be,” &c.

The passage quoted from Daniel is taken from a poem addressed to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, and the two last lines, printed in Italics, are by him translated from Seneca. The whole Poem is very beautiful. I will transcribe four stanzas from it, as they contain an admirable picture of the state of a wise Man’s mind in a time of public commotion.

Nor is he moved with all the thunder-cracks
Of tyrants’ threats, or with the surly brow
Of Power, that proudly sits on others’ crimes ;
Charged with more crying sins than those he checks.

The storms of sad confusion that may grow
Up in the present for the coming times,
Appal not him ; that hath no side at all,
But of himself, and knows the worst can fall.

Although his heart (so near allied to earth)
Cannot but pity the perplexed state
Of troublous and distressed mortality,
That thus make way unto the ugly birth
Of their own sorrows, and do still beget
Affliction upon Imbecility ;
Yet seeing thus the course of things must run,
He looks thereon not strange, but as fore-done.

And whilst distraught ambition compasses,
And is encompass'd, while as craft deceives :
And is deceiv'd : whilst man doth ransack man,
And builds on blood, and rises by distress ;
And th' Inheritance of desolation leaves
To great-expecting hopes : He looks thereon,
As from the shore of peace, with unwet eye,
And bears no venture in Impiety.

Thus, Lady, fares that man that hath prepared
A rest for his desires ; and sees all things
Beneath him ; and hath learn'd this book of man,
Full of the notes of frailty ; and compar'd
The best of glory with her sufferings :
By whom, I see, you labour all you can
To plant your heart ! and set your thoughts as near
His glorious mansion as your powers can bear.

1814.

Page 226.

*“ Or rather, as we stand on holy earth
And have the dead around us.”*

Leo. You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves ?

Priest. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard,
Perhaps I might ; — — — — —
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round ;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.

See the Author's poem of *The Brothers*, published in the Lyrical
Ballads, in the year 1800. 1814.

Page 239.

“ And suffering Nature grieved that one should die.”

Southey's Retrospect. 1814.

Page 239.

“ And whence that tribute ? wherefore these regards ? ”

The sentiments and opinions here uttered are in unison with those expressed in the following Essay on Epitaphs, which was furnished by me for Mr Coleridge's periodical work, the Friend ; and as they are dictated by a spirit congenial to that which pervades this and the two succeeding books, the sympathising reader will not be displeased to see the Essay here annexed.

ESSAY UPON EPITAPHS.

It needs scarcely be said, that an Epitaph presupposes a Monument, upon which it is to be engraven. Almost all Nations have wished that certain external signs should point out the places where their dead are interred. Among savage tribes unacquainted with letters this has mostly been done either by rude stones placed near the graves, or by mounds of earth raised over them. This custom proceeded obviously from a twofold desire ; first, to guard the remains of the deceased from irreverent approach or from savage violation : and, secondly, to preserve their memory. “ Never any,” says Camden, “ neglected burial but some savage nations ; as the Bactrians, which cast their dead to the dogs ; some varlet philosophers, as Diogenes, who desired to be devoured of fishes ; some dissolute courtiers, as Mæcenas, who was wont to say, Non tumulum curo ; sepelit natura relictos.

“ I'm careless of a grave :—Nature her dead will save.”

As soon as nations had learned the use of letters, epitaphs were inscribed upon these monuments ; in order that their intention might be more surely and adequately fulfilled. I have derived monuments and epitaphs from two sources of feeling : but these do in fact resolve themselves into one. The invention of epitaphs, Weever, in his Discourse of Funeral Monuments, says rightly, “ proceeded from the presage of fore-feeling of immortality, implanted in all men naturally, and is referred to the scholars of Linus the Theban poet, who flourished about the year of the world two thousand seven hundred ; who first bewailed this Linus their Master, when he was slain, in doleful verses, then called of him *Ælina*, afterwards *Epitaphia*, for that they were first sung at burials, after engraved upon the sepulchres.”

And, verily, without the consciousness of a principle of immortality in the human soul, Man could never have had awakened in him the desire to live in the remembrance of his fellows : mere love, or the yearning of kind towards kind, could not have produced it. The dog or horse perishes in the field, or in the stall, by the side of his companions ; and is incapable of anticipating the sorrow with which his sur-

rounding associates shall bemoan his death or pine for his loss ; he cannot pre-conceive this regret, he can form no thought of it ; and therefore cannot possibly have a desire to leave such regret or remembrance behind him. Add to the principle of love which exists in the inferior animals, the faculty of reason which exists in Man alone ; will the conjunction of these account for the desire ? Doubtless it is a necessary consequence of this conjunction ; yet not I think as a direct result, but only to be come at through an intermediate thought, viz., that of an intimation or assurance within us, that some part of our nature is imperishable. At least the precedence, in order of birth, of one feeling to the other, is unquestionable. If we look back upon the days of childhood, we shall find that the time is not in remembrance when, with respect to our own individual Being, the mind was without this assurance ; whereas, the wish to be remembered by our friends or kindred after death, or even in absence, is, as we shall discover, a sensation that does not form itself till the *social* feelings have been developed, and the Reason has connected itself with a wide range of objects. Forlorn, and cut off from communication with the best part of his nature, must that man be, who should derive the sense of immortality, as it exists in the mind of a child, from the same unthinking gaiety or liveliness of animal spirits with which the lamb in the meadow, or any other irrational creature is endowed ; who should ascribe it, in short, to blank ignorance in the child ; to an inability arising from the imperfect state of his faculties to come, in any point of his being, into contact with a notion of death ; or to an unreflecting acquiescence in what had been instilled into him ! Has such an unfold of the mysteries of nature, though he may have forgotten his former self, ever noticed the early, obstinate, and unappeasable inquisitiveness of children upon the subject of origination ? This single fact proves outwardly the monstrosity of those suppositions : for, if we had no direct external testimony that the minds of very young children meditate feelingly upon death and immortality, these inquiries, which we all know they are perpetually making concerning the *whence*, do necessarily include correspondent habits of interrogation concerning the *whither*. Origin and tendency are notions inseparably co-relative. Never did a child stand by the side of a running stream, pondering within himself what power was the feeder of the perpetual current, from what never-wearied sources the body of water was supplied, but he must have been inevitably propelled to follow this question by another : "Towards what abyss is it in progress ? what receptacle can contain the mighty influx ?" And the spirit of the answer must have been, though the word might be sea or ocean, accompanied perhaps with an image gathered from a map, or from the real object in nature—these might have been the *letter*, but the *spirit* of the answer must have been *as* inevitably,—a receptacle without bounds or dimensions ;—nothing less than infinity. We may, then, be justified in asserting,

that the sense of immortality, if not a co-existent and twin birth with Reason, is among the earliest of her offspring: and we may further assert, that from these conjoined, and under their countenance, the human affections are gradually formed and opened out. This is not the place to enter into the recesses of these investigations; but the subject requires me here to make a plain avowal, that, for my own part, it is to me inconceivable, that the sympathies of love towards each other, which grow with our growth, could ever attain any new strength, or even preserve the old, after we had received from the outward senses the impression of death, and were in the habit of having that impression daily renewed and its accompanying feeling brought home to ourselves, and to those we love; if the same were not counteracted by those communications with our internal Being, which are anterior to all these experiences, and with which revelation coincides, and has through that coincidence alone (for otherwise it could not possess it) a power to affect us. I confess, with me the conviction is absolute, that, if the impression and sense of death were not thus counterbalanced, such a hollowness would pervade the whole system of things, such a want of correspondence and consistency, a disproportion so astounding betwixt means and ends, that there could be no repose, no joy. Were we to grow up unfostered by this genial warmth, a frost would chill the spirit, so penetrating and powerful, that there could be no motions of the life of love; and infinitely less could we have any wish to be remembered after we had passed away from a world in which each man had moved about like a shadow.—If, then, in a creature endowed with the faculties of foresight and reason, the social affections could not have unfolded themselves uncountenanced by the faith that Man is an immortal being; and if, consequently, neither could the individual dying have had a desire to survive in the remembrance of his fellows, nor on their side could they have felt a wish to preserve for future times vestiges of the departed; it follows, as a final inference, that without the belief in immortality, wherein these several desires originate, neither monuments nor epitaphs, in affectionate or laudatory commemoration of the deceased, could have existed in the world.

Simonides, it is related, upon landing in a strange country, found the corse of an unknown person lying by the sea-side; he buried it, and was honoured throughout Greece for the piety of that act. Another ancient Philosopher, chancing to fix his eyes upon a dead body, regarded the same with slight, if not with contempt; saying, "See the shell of the flown bird!" But it is not to be supposed that the moral and tender-hearted Simonides was incapable of the lofty movements of thought, to which that other Sage gave way at the moment while his soul was intent only upon the indestructible being; nor, on the other hand, that he, in whose sight a lifeless human body was of no more value than the worthless shell from which the living fowl had departed,

would not, in a different mood of mind, have been affected by those earthly considerations which had incited the philosophic Poet to the performance of that pious duty. And with regard to this latter we may be assured that, if he had been destitute of the capability of communing with the more exalted thoughts that appertain to human nature, he would have cared no more for the corse of the stranger than for the dead body of a seal or porpoise which might have been cast up by the waves. We respect the corporeal frame of Man, not merely because it is the habitation of a rational, but of an immortal Soul. Each of these Sages was in sympathy with the best feelings of our nature ; feelings which, though they seem opposite to each other, have another and a finer connection than that of contrast.—It is a connection formed through the subtle progress by which, both in the natural and the moral world, qualities pass insensibly into their contraries, and things revolve upon each other. As, in sailing upon the orb of this planet, a voyage towards the regions where the sun sets, conducts gradually to the quarter where we have been accustomed to behold it come forth at its rising ; and, in like manner, a voyage towards the east, the birth-place in our imagination of the morning, leads finally to the quarter where the sun is last seen when he departs from our eyes ; so the contemplative Soul, travelling in the direction of mortality, advances to the country of everlasting life ; and, in like manner, may she continue to explore those cheerful tracts, till she is brought back, for her advantage and benefit, to the land of transitory things—of sorrow and of tears.

On a midway point, therefore, which commands the thoughts and feelings of the two Sages whom we have represented in contrast, does the Author of that species of composition, the laws of which it is our present purpose to explain, take his stand. Accordingly, recurring to the twofold desire of guarding the remains of the deceased and preserving their memory, it may be said that a sepulchral monument is a tribute to a man as a human being ; and that an epitaph (in the ordinary meaning attached to the word) includes this general feeling and something more ; and is a record to preserve the memory of the dead, as a tribute due to his individual worth, for a satisfaction to the sorrowing hearts of the survivors, and for the common benefit of the living : which record is to be accomplished, not in a general manner, but, where it can, *in close connection with the bodily remains of the deceased* : and these, it may be added, among the modern nations of Europe, are deposited within, or contiguous to, their places of worship. In ancient times, as is well known, it was the custom to bury the dead beyond the walls of towns and cities ; and among the Greeks and Romans they were frequently interred by the way-sides.

I could here pause with pleasure, and invite the Reader to indulge with me in contemplation of the advantages which must have attended such a practice. We might ruminate upon the beauty which the

monuments, thus placed, must have borrowed from the surrounding images of nature—from the trees, the wild flowers, from a stream running perhaps within sight or hearing, from the beaten road stretching its weary length hard by. Many tender similitudes must these objects have presented to the mind of the traveller leaning upon one of the tombs, or reposing in the coolness of its shade, whether he had halted from weariness or in compliance with the invitation, 'Pause, Traveller!' so often found upon the monuments. And to its epitaph also must have been supplied strong appeals to visible appearances or immediate impressions, lively and affecting analogies of life as a journey—death as a sleep overcoming the tired wayfarer—of misfortune as a storm that falls suddenly upon him—of beauty as a flower that passeth away, or of innocent pleasure as one that may be gathered—of virtue that standeth firm as a rock against the beating waves;—of hope "undermined insensibly like the poplar by the side of the river that has fed it," or blasted in a moment like a pine-tree by the stroke of lightning upon the mountain-top—of admonitions and heart-stirring remembrances, like a refreshing breeze that comes without warning, or the taste of the waters of an unexpected fountain. These, and similar suggestions, must have given, formerly, to the language of the senseless stone a voice enforced and endeared by the benignity of that nature with which it was in unison.—We, in modern times, have lost much of these advantages; and they are but in a small degree counterbalanced to the inhabitants of large towns and cities, by the custom of depositing the dead within, or contiguous to, their places of worship; however splendid or imposing may be the appearance of those edifices, or however interesting or salutary the recollections associated with them. Even were it not true that tombs lose their monitory virtue when thus obtruded upon the notice of men occupied with the cares of the world, and too often sullied and defiled by those cares, yet still, when death is in our thoughts, nothing can make amends for the want of the soothing influences of nature, and for the absence of those types of renovation and decay, which the fields and woods offer to the notice of the serious and contemplative mind. To feel the force of this sentiment, let a man only compare in imagination the unsightly manner in which our monuments are crowded together in the busy, noisy, unclean, and almost grassless church-yard of a large town, with the still seclusion of a Turkish cemetery, in some remote place; and yet further sanctified by the grove of cypress in which it is embosomed. Thoughts in the same temper as these have already been expressed with true sensibility by an ingenuous Poet of the present day. The subject of his poem is "All Saints Church, Derby:" he has been deploring the forbidding and unseemly appearance of its burial-ground, and uttering a wish, that in past times the practice had been adopted of interring the inhabitants of large towns in the country.—

“ Then in some rural, calm, sequestered spot,
 Where healing Nature her benignant look
 Ne’er changes, save at that lorn season, when,
 With tresses drooping o’er her sable stole,
 She yearly mourns the mortal doom of man,
 Her noblest work, (so Israel’s virgins erst,
 With annual moan upon the mountains wept
 Their fairest gone,) there in that rural scene,
 So placid, so congenial to the wish
 The Christian feels, of peaceful rest within
 The silent grave, I would have strayed :

—wandered forth, where the cold dew of heaven
 Lay on the humbler graves around, what time
 The pale moon gazed upon the turfy mounds,
 Pensive, as though like me, in lonely muse,
 ’Twere brooding on the dead inhumed beneath.
 There while with him, the holy man of Uz,
 O’er human destiny I sympathised,
 Counting the long, long periods prophecy
 Decrees to roll, ere the great day arrives
 Of resurrection, oft the blue-eyed Spring
 Had met me with her blossoms, as the Dove,
 Of old, returned with olive leaf, to cheer
 The patriarch mourning o’er a world destroyed :
 And I would bless her visit ; for to me
 ’Tis sweet to trace the consonance that links
 As one, the works of Nature and the word
 Of God.”——

JOHN EDWARDS.

A village church-yard, lying as it does in the lap of nature, may indeed be most favourably contrasted with that of a town of crowded population ; and sepulture therein combines many of the best tendencies which belong to the mode practised by the Ancients, with others peculiar to itself. The sensations of pious cheerfulness, which attend the celebration of the sabbath day in rural places, are profitably chastised by the sight of the graves of kindred and friends, gathered together in that general home towards which the thoughtful yet happy spectators themselves are journeying. Hence a parish-church, in the stillness of the country, is a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead ; a point to which are habitually referred the nearest concerns of both.

As, then, both in cities and in villages, the dead are deposited in close connection with our places of worship, with us the composition of an epitaph naturally turns, still more than among the nations of antiquity, upon the most serious and solemn affections of the human mind ; upon departed worth—upon personal or social sorrow and admiration—upon religion, individual and social—upon time, and upon eternity. Accordingly, it suffices, in ordinary cases, to secure a composition of this kind from censure, that it contains nothing that shall

shock or be inconsistent with this spirit. But, to entitle an epitaph to praise, more than this is necessary. It ought to contain some thought or feeling belonging to the mortal or immortal part of our nature touchingly expressed; and if that be done, however general or even trite the sentiment may be, every man of pure mind will read the words with pleasure and gratitude. A husband bewails a wife; a parent breathes a sigh of disappointed hope over a lost child; a son utters a sentiment of filial reverence for a departed father or mother; a friend perhaps inscribes an encomium recording the companionable qualities, or the solid virtues, of the tenant of the grave, whose departure has left a sadness upon his memory. This and a pious admonition to the living, and a humble expression of Christian confidence in immortality, is the language of a thousand church-yards; and it does not often happen that anything, in a greater degree discriminate or appropriate to the dead or to the living, is to be found in them. This want of discrimination has been ascribed by Dr Johnson, in his Essay upon the epitaphs of Pope, to two causes; first, the scantiness of the objects of human praise; and, secondly, the want of variety in the characters of men; or, to use his own words, "to the fact, that the greater part of mankind have no character at all." Such language may be holden without blame among the generalities of common conversation; but does not become a critic and a moralist speaking seriously upon a serious subject. The objects of admiration in human nature are not scanty, but abundant: and every man has a character of his own, to the eye that has skill to perceive it. The real cause of the acknowledged want of discrimination in sepulchral memorials is this: That to analyse the characters of others, especially of those whom we love, is not a common or natural employment of men at any time. We are not anxious unerringly to understand the constitution of the minds of those who have soothed, who have cheered, who have supported us: with whom we have been long and daily pleased or delighted. The affections are their own justification. The light of love in our hearts is a satisfactory evidence that there is a body of worth in the minds of our friends or kindred, whence that light has proceeded. We shrink from the thought of placing their merits and defects to be weighed against each other in the nice balance of pure intellect; nor do we find much temptation to detect the shades by which a good quality or virtue is discriminated in them from an excellence known by the same general name as it exists in the mind of another; and, least of all, do we incline to these refinements when under the pressure of sorrow, admiration, or regret, or when actuated by any of those feelings which incite men to prolong the memory of their friends and kindred, by records placed in the bosom of the all-uniting and equalising receptacle of the dead.

The first requisite, then, in an Epitaph is, that it should speak, in a tone which shall sink into the heart, the general language of humanity

as connected with the subject of death—the source from which an epitaph proceeds—of death, and of life. To be born and to die are the two points in which all men feel themselves to be in absolute coincidence. This general language may be uttered so strikingly as to entitle an epitaph to high praise ; yet it cannot lay claim to the highest unless other excellencies be superadded. Passing through all intermediate steps, we will attempt to determine at once what these excellencies are, and wherein consists the perfection of this species of composition.—It will be found to lie in a due proportion of the common or universal feeling of humanity to sensations excited by a distinct and clear conception, conveyed to the reader's mind, of the individual, whose death is deplored and whose memory is to be preserved ; at least of his character as, after death, it appeared to those who loved him and lament his loss. The general sympathy ought to be quickened, provoked, and diversified, by particular thoughts, actions, images,—circumstances of age, occupation, manner of life, prosperity which the deceased had known, or adversity to which he had been subject ; and these ought to be bound together and solemnised into one harmony by the general sympathy. The two powers should temper, restrain, and exalt each other. The reader ought to know who and what the man was whom he is called upon to think of with interest. A distinct conception should be given (implicitly where it can, rather than explicitly) of the individual lamented.—But the writer of an epitaph is not an anatomist, who dissects the internal frame of the mind ; he is not even a painter, who executes a portrait at leisure and in entire tranquillity : his delineation, we must remember, is performed by the side of the grave ; and, what is more, the grave of one whom he loves and admires. What purity and brightness is that virtue clothed in, the image of which must no longer bless our living eyes ! The character of a deceased friend or beloved kinsman is not seen, no—nor ought to be seen, otherwise than as a tree through a tender haze or a luminous mist, that spiritualises and beautifies it ; that takes away, indeed, but only to the end that the parts which are not abstracted may appear more dignified and lovely ; may impress and affect the more. Shall we say, then, that this is not truth, not a faithful image ; and that, accordingly, the purposes of commemoration cannot be answered ?—It is truth, and of the highest order ; for, though doubtless things are not apparent which did exist ; yet, the object being looked at through this medium, parts and proportions are brought into distinct view which before had been only imperfectly or unconsciously seen : it is truth hallowed by love—the joint offspring of the worth of the dead and the affections of the living ! This may easily be brought to the test. Let one, whose eyes have been sharpened by personal hostility to discover what was amiss in the character of a good man, hear the tidings of his death, and what a change is wrought in a moment ! Enmity melts away ; and, as it disappears, unsightliness, disproportion, and deformity, vanish ; and,

through the influence of commiseration, a harmony of love and beauty succeeds. Bring such a man to the tombstone on which shall be inscribed an epitaph on his adversary, composed in the spirit which we have recommended. Would he turn from it as from an idle tale? No ;—the thoughtful look, the sigh, and perhaps the involuntary tear, would testify that it had a sane, a generous, and good meaning ; and that on the writer's mind had remained an impression which was a true abstract of the character of the deceased ; that his gifts and graces were remembered in the simplicity in which they ought to be remembered. The composition and quality of the mind of a virtuous man, contemplated by the side of the grave where his body is mouldering, ought to appear, and be felt as something midway between what he was on earth walking about with his living frailties, and what he may be presumed to be as a Spirit in heaven.

It suffices, therefore, that the trunk and the main branches of the worth of the deceased be boldly and unaffectedly represented. Any further detail, minutely and scrupulously pursued, especially if this be done with laborious and antithetic discriminations, must inevitably frustrate its own purpose ; forcing the passing Spectator to this conclusion,—either that the dead did not possess the merits ascribed to him, or that they who have raised a monument to his memory and must therefore be supposed to have been closely connected with him, were incapable of perceiving those merits ; or at least during the act of composition had lost sight of them ; for, the understanding having been so busy in its petty occupation, how could the heart of the mourner be other than cold ? and in either of these cases, whether the fault be on the part of the buried person or the survivors, the memorial is unaffecting and profitless.

Much better is it to fall short in discrimination than to pursue it too far, or to labour it unfeelingly. For in no place are we so much disposed to dwell upon those points, of nature and condition, wherein all men resemble each other, as in the temple where the universal Father is worshipped, or by the side of the grave which gathers all human Beings to itself, and “equalises the lofty and the low.” We suffer and we weep with the same heart ; we love and are anxious for one another in one spirit ; our hopes look to the same quarter ; and the virtues by which we are all to be furthered and supported, as patience, meekness, good-will, justice, temperance, and temperate desires, are in an equal degree the concern of us all. Let an Epitaph, then, contain at least these acknowledgments to our common nature ; nor let the sense of their importance be sacrificed to a balance of opposite qualities or minute distinctions in individual character ; which if they do not, (as will for the most part be the case,) when examined, resolve themselves into a trick of words, will, even when they are true and just, for the most part be grievously out of place ; for, as it is probable that few only have explored these intricacies of human nature, so can the tracing

of them be interesting only to a few. But an epitaph is not a proud writing shut up for the studious : it is exposed to all—to the wise and the most ignorant ; it is condescending, perspicuous, and lovingly solicits regard ; its story and admonitions are brief, that the thoughtless, the busy, and indolent, may not be deterred, nor the impatient tired : the stooping old man cons the engraven record like a second horn-book ;—the child is proud that he can read it ;—and the stranger is introduced through its mediation to the company of a friend : it is concerning all, and for all :—in the church-yard it is open to the day ; the sun looks down upon the stone, and the rains of heaven beat against it.

Yet, though the writer who would excite sympathy is bound in this case, more than in any other, to give proof that he himself has been moved, it is to be remembered, that to raise a monument is a sober and a reflective act ; that the inscription which it bears is intended to be permanent, and for universal perusal ; and that, for this reason, the thoughts and feelings expressed should be permanent also—liberated from that weakness and anguish of sorrow which is in nature transitory, and which with instinctive decency retires from notice. The passions should be subdued, the emotions controlled ; strong, indeed, but nothing ungovernable or wholly involuntary. Seemliness requires this, and truth requires it also : for how can the narrator otherwise be trusted ? Moreover, a grave is a tranquillising object : resignation in course of time springs up from it as naturally as the wild flowers, besprinkling the turf with which it may be covered, or gathering round the monument by which it is defended. The very form and substance of the monument which has received the inscription, and the appearance of the letters, testifying with what a slow and laborious hand they must have been engraven, might seem to reproach the author who had given way upon this occasion to transports of mind, or to quick turns of conflicting passion ; though the same might constitute the life and beauty of a funeral oration or elegiac poem.

These sensations and judgments, acted upon perhaps unconsciously, have been one of the main causes why epitaphs so often personate the deceased, and represent him as speaking from his own tomb-stone. The departed Mortal is introduced telling you himself that his pains are gone ; that a state of rest is come ; and he conjures you to weep for him no longer. He admonishes with the voice of one experienced in the vanity of those affections which are confined to earthly objects, and gives a verdict like a superior Being, performing the office of a judge, who has no temptations to mislead him, and whose decision cannot but be dispassionate. Thus is death disarmed of its sting, and affliction unsubstantialised. By this tender fiction, the survivors bind themselves to a sedater sorrow, and employ the intervention of the imagination in order that the reason may speak her own language earlier than she would otherwise have been enabled to do. This

shadowy interposition also harmoniously unites the two worlds of the living and the dead by their appropriate affections. And it may be observed, that here we have an additional proof of the propriety with which sepulchral inscriptions were referred to the consciousness of immortality as their primal source.

I do not speak with a wish to recommend that an epitaph should be cast in this mould preferably to the still more common one, in which what is said comes from the survivors directly ; but rather to point out how natural those feelings are which have induced men, in all states and ranks of society, so frequently to adopt this mode. And this I have done chiefly in order that the laws, which ought to govern the composition of the other, may be better understood. This latter mode, namely, that in which the survivors speak in their own persons, seems to me upon the whole greatly preferable : as it admits a wider range of notices ; and, above all, because, excluding the fiction which is the groundwork of the other, it rests upon a more solid basis.

Enough has been said to convey our notion of a perfect epitaph ; but it must be borne in mind that one is meant which will best answer the *general* ends of that species of composition. According to the course pointed out, the worth of private life, through all varieties of situation and character, will be most honourably and profitably preserved in memory. Nor would the model recommended less suit public men, in all instances save of those persons who by the greatness of their services in the employments of peace or war, or by the surpassing excellence of their works in art, literature, or science, have made themselves not only universally known, but have filled the heart of their country with everlasting gratitude. Yet I must here pause to correct myself. In describing the general tenor of thought which epitaphs ought to hold, I have omitted to say, that if it be the *actions* of a man, or even some *one* conspicuous or beneficial act of local or general utility, which have distinguished him, and excited a desire that he should be remembered, then, of course, ought the attention to be directed chiefly to those actions or that act : and such sentiments dwelt upon as naturally arise out of them or it. Having made this necessary distinction, I proceed.—The mighty benefactors of mankind, as they are not only known by the immediate survivors, but will continue to be known familiarly to latest posterity, do not stand in need of biographic sketches, in such a place ; nor of delineations of character to individualise them. This is already done by their Works, in the memories of men. Their naked names, and a grand comprehensive sentiment of civic gratitude, patriotic love, or human admiration—or the utterance of some elementary principle most essential in the constitution of true virtue ;—or a declaration touching that pious humility and self-abasement, which are ever most profound as minds are most susceptible of genuine exaltation—or an intuition, communicated in adequate words, of the sublimity of intellectual power ;—these are the

only tribute which can here be paid—the only offering that upon such an altar would not be unworthy.

“What needs my Shakspeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in piled stones,
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-y-pointing pyramid?
Dear Son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument,
And so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.” 1814.

Page 242.

“*And spires whose 'silent finger points to Heaven.'*”

An instinctive taste teaches men to build their churches in flat countries with spire-steeple, which as they cannot be referred to any other object, point as with silent finger to the sky and stars, and sometimes, when they reflect the brazen light of a rich though rainy sunset, appear like a pyramid of flame burning heaven-ward. See “The Friend,” by S. T. Coleridge, No. 14, p. 223. 1814.

Page 317.

“*That Sycamore, which annually holds
Within its shade as in a stately tent.*”

“This Sycamore oft musical with Bees;
Such Tents the Patriarchs loved.”

S. T. Coleridge. 1814.

Page 332.

“*Perish the roses and the flowers of Kings.*”

The “Transit gloria mundi” is finely expressed in the Introduction to the Foundation-charters of some of the ancient Abbeys. Some expressions here used are taken from that of the Abbey of St Mary's, Furness, the translation of which is as follows:—

“Considering every day the uncertainty of life, that the roses and flowers of Kings, Emperors, and Dukes, and the crowns and palms of all the great, wither and decay; and that all things, with an uninterrupted course, tend to dissolution and death: I therefore,” &c. 1814.

Page 340.

—“*Earth has lent
Her waters, Air her breezes.*”

In treating this subject, it was impossible not to recollect, with

gratitude, the pleasing picture, which, in his Poem of the Fleece, the excellent and amiable Dyer has given of the influences of manufacturing industry upon the face of this Island. He wrote at a time when machinery was first beginning to be introduced, and his benevolent heart prompted him to augur from it nothing but good. Truth has compelled me to dwell upon the baneful effects arising out of an ill-regulated and excessive application of powers so admirable in themselves. 1814.

Page 373.

“Binding herself by Statute.”

The discovery of Dr Bell affords marvellous facilities for carrying this into effect; and it is impossible to overrate the benefit which might accrue to humanity from the universal application of this simple engine under an enlightened and conscientious government. 1814.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

(See p. 2.)

The grave of James Patrick,—the pedlar whose character and habits gave rise to ‘The Wanderer’ of *The Excursion*,—may still be seen in the church-yard within the town of Kendal. The following extract from the *Papers, Letters, and Journals of William Pearson*, edited by his widow, and printed in London, in 1863, for private circulation, refers to Patrick. “He” (*i.e.*, William Pearson) “sometimes went to Kendal on Sundays, in order to worship with Unitarians, in the old Presbyterian *meeting-house*. This quiet secluded building, though situated in the heart of the town, is overshadowed by trees, beneath which rest many worthies of departed times: one of whom, James Patrick, was the prototype of the *Wanderer* of the ‘*Excursion*.’ A plain mural slab, outside the east wall of the chapel—which was his spiritual home—bears the following inscription:—

NEAR THIS PLACE ARE BURIED
JOHN PATRICK OF BARNARD CASTLE,
WHO DIED MAY 10TH, 1753, AGED 51 YEARS;
MARGARET, THE DAUGHTER
OF JAMES AND MARY PATRICK,
WHO DIED NOVEMBER 26TH, 1767, IN HER INFANCY;
JAMES PATRICK OF KENDAL,
WHO DIED MARCH 2D, 1787, AGED 71 YEARS.

When staying in Kendal, with his friend Mr Thomas Cookson, Mr Wordsworth himself was an occasional worshipper, along with the family, at this chapel; and thus became acquainted with the minister, the Reverend John Harrison, and with one of his congregation, the well-known blind mathematician and botanist, Mr John Gough, with the delineation of whose remarkable powers and character, the poet has enriched his ‘*Excursion*’; and in turn, has, by the touch of his genius, imparted to them a lustre that will not fade, whilst English Literature shall endure” (p. 13.)

For references to John Gough, see p. 313 of this volume, and note G in the Appendix.

NOTE B.

(See p. 15.)

The following unpublished letter from Wordsworth to Mr Dyce, shews his estimation of the text of the first octavo (1820), as compared with that of the earliest quarto edition (1814) :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—When you read *The Excursion* do not read the quarto. It is improved in the 8vo E.:—but I thought the quarto might have its value with you as a collector.—Believe me, faithfully yours,

“W. WORDSWORTH.”

7th April, my birthday—61,
12 Bryanston Street.

NOTE C.

(See p. 45.)

I am indebted to H. T. Rhoades, Esq., Rugby, for directing my attention to the passage in Moschus's epitaph on Bion, referred to at p. 45, and to the passages from Virgil and Catullus. The full text of the passage, from the beginning of Moschus's epitaph on Bion, 1—7, is as follows :—

“Αἰλινά μοι στοναχῆιτε νάπαι καὶ Δώριον ὕδωρ,
Καὶ ποταμοὶ κλαίετε τὸν ἡμερβέντα Βίωνα.
Νῦν φυτά μοι μύρεσθε, καὶ ἄλσεα νῦν γοάοισθε.
“Ἄνθεα νῦν στυγνοῖσιν ἀποπνεοῖτε κορύμβοις.
Νῦν ῥόδα φοινίσσεσθε τὰ πένθιμα, νῦν ἀνεμώναι,
Νῦν ὑάκινθε λάλει τὰ σὰ γράμματα, καὶ πλέον “Αἰ ’Αἰ
Δάμβανε τοῖς πετάλοισι· καλὸς τέθνακε μελικτᾶς.

See also Theocritus, Idyll 3, and compare the philosophic myths in the stories of Orpheus, Amphion, &c.

NOTE D.

(See p. 115.)

The following extract from Dr Daniel E. Brinton's work, the *Myths of the New World*, reached me after the preceding pages had gone to press :—

“As in oriental legends, the origin of man from the earth was veiled under the story that he was the progeny of some mountain by the embrace of Mithras or Jupiter, so the Indians often pointed to some height or some cavern as the spot whence the first of men issued, adult and armed, from the womb of the All-mother Earth. The oldest name of the Alleghany Mountains is Paemotinck, or Pemolnick, an Algonkin word, the meaning of which is said to be “The origin of the Indians.”

"The Witchitas, who dwelt on the Red River among the mountains named after them, have a tradition that their progenitors issued from the rocks about their homes, and many other tribes, the Tahkalis, Navajos, Coryoterias, and the Hailians, for instance, set up this claim to be Autochthones. . . .

"All those tribes, the Creeks, Seminoles, Choctaws, Chicasaws, and Natchez, who, according to tradition, were in remote times banded into one common confederacy under the headship of the last-mentioned, located their earliest ancestry near an artificial eminence in the Valley of the Big Black River, in the Natchez country, whence they pretended to have emerged. . . .

"A parallel to this southern legend occurs among the Six Nations of the north. They with one consent, if we may credit the account of Cusic, looked to a mountain near the falls of the Oswego River, in the State of New York, as the locality where the forefathers first saw the light of day, and that they had some such legend the name Oneida, 'people of the Stone,' would seem to testify."

"An ancient legend of the Aztecs derived their nation from a place called Chicomóztoc, the Seven Caverns, located north of Mexico. Antiquaries have indulged in all sorts of speculations as to what this means. . . . Caverns and hollow trees were in fact the homes and temples of our first parents, and from them they went forth to conquer and adorn the world; and from the inorganic constituents of the soil acted on by Light, treated by Divine Force, vivified by the Spirit, did in reality the first of men proceed.

"This cavern, which thus dimly lingered in the memories of nations, occasionally expanded to a nether world, imagined to underlie this of ours, and still inhabited by beings of our kind, who have never been lucky enough to discover its exit. The Mandans and Minnetarees, on the Missouri River, supposed this exit was near a certain hill in their territory. . . ."—*Myths of the New World*, pp. 224-8.—ED.

N O T E E.

(See p. 142.)

For the following letters in reference to the "Muccawiss," I am indebted to Mr Henry Reed,—son of the late Professor Reed of Philadelphia,—whose assistance in all matters relating to Wordsworth in America has been invaluable. (See the prefatory note to this volume.)

"No. 400 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA,

"September 26th, 1883.

"MY DEAR MR KNIGHT,—Dr Brinton tells me that Muccawiss is the Algonquin for whip-poor-will, and he will ascertain for me the precise spelling, and, if possible, the book from which W. W. probably got his information.—Yours sincerely,

HENRY REED."

115 SOUTH SEVENTH STREET,
 "September 27th, 1883.

"DEAR SIR,—I have failed to find the exact word used by Wordsworth—muccawiss. The nearest to it is "moshkaois," which signifies 'bittern,' a water-fowl of the diver class, to which the name has reference, it being a derivative from a verb meaning to rise to the surface of the water. The word is no doubt of Algonkin origin, and I would suggest that you write to the Algonkin scholar, *par excellence*, of our country, Colonel J. Hammond Trumbull, Hartford, Conn., who is both able and willing to solve all the enigmas of that difficult tongue.—Very truly yours,

D. G. BRINTON."

"Henry Reed, Esq."

"NO 400 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA,
 "October 2d, 1883.

"MY DEAR MR. KNIGHT,—I enclose a letter from Colonel Trumbull, which I think you will find satisfactory.—Yours very sincerely,
 "HENRY REED."

"HARTFORD, CONN., Sept. 29th, 1883.

"HENRY REED, Esq., Philadelphia.

"DEAR SIR,—Wordsworth's 'Muccawis' was, certainly, a Whip-poor-will, and he must have taken the Indian name, directly or at second-hand, from Carver's Travels. Among the birds 'found in the interior parts of North America,' Carver (chap. 18) describes 'the Whipper-will, or, as it is termed by the Indians, the *Muckawis*. . . . As soon as night comes on, these birds will place themselves on the fences, stumps, or stones that lie near some house, and *repeat their melancholy notes without any variation till midnight*,' etc. So Wordsworth's

'Melancholy muccawis

Repeated, o'er and o'er, his plaintive cry.'

"I have an impression—which I have not just now leisure to verify—that Carver's description of this and some other American birds was reprinted in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Two or three English editions of the Travels had been printed before the 'Excursion' was written.

"I find no other authority for this 'Indian' name. The Chippeway name for the Whip-poor-will is (as given by Tanner or Dr E. James) *Wâwonaissa*. Nuttall states, the Delaware name was *Wecoâlis*: Zeisberger wrote it *Wecoolis*.—Yours sincerely,

"J. HAMMOND TRUMBULL.

"P.S.—Carver did not name 'the merry mocking-bird'—which Wordsworth makes the companion of the 'Muccawis'; but Campbell had heard of 'the merry mock-bird's song,' and copied a description of it from Ashe's 'Travels in America,' in a note to 'Gertrude of Wyoming' (1809), pt. i., st. 3."

Since receiving these letters I have ascertained that Wordsworth had in his library at Rydal Mount—whether he had it at Allan Bank I cannot say—a copy of one of the English editions of Carver's Travels.

Compare *Wanderings in South America, &c.*, by Charles Waterton—a work which was also in Wordsworth's library at Rydal. I quote from a recent edition (1879). See pp. 99, 111, 199, and 488:—

“When in thy hammock, should the thought of thy little crosses and disappointments, in thy ups and downs through life, break in upon thee, and throw thee into a pensive mood, the owl will bear thee company. She will tell thee that hard has been her fate too; and at intervals ‘Whip-poor-will’ and ‘Willy-come-go’ will take up the tale of sorrow. Ovid has told thee how the owl once boasted the human form, and lost it for a very small offence; and were the poet alive now, he would inform thee, that ‘Whip-poor-will’ and ‘Willy-come-go’ are the shades of these poor African and Indian slaves, who died worn out and broken hearted. They wail and cry, ‘Whip-poor-will’ and ‘Willy-come-go’ all night long; and often, when the moon shines, you see them sitting on the green turf, near the houses of those whose ancestors tore them from the bosom of their helpless families, which all probably perished through grief and want, after their support was gone.” (P. 99.)

“The Caprimulgus wheels in busy flight around the canoe, while ‘Whip-poor-will’ sits on the broken stump near the water's edge, complaining as the shades of night set in.” (P. 111.)

See, in addition, Note L in this Appendix.

NOTE F.

(See p. 175.)

A translation of the passage from Pausanias is quoted in the text. I append extracts from some letters I have received on the subject. The first are from Mr Heard, Fettes College, Edinburgh.

Oct. 5th.

“I cannot find a reference to Cephissus; but I send you a passage in point from Homer, *Iliad* 23, 140. I rather suspect Wordsworth had this passage in mind, for no commentator I have quotes a parallel; in which case he has either forgotten *Spercheius* as the river, or substituted, on purpose, the better known Attic river.

Achilles offers to the dead Patroclus the locks which his father had vowed to *Spercheius*, if ever he returned to his native land

ἐνθ' αὐτ' ἄλλ' ἐνόησε ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς·
στὰς ἀπάνευθε πυρῆς ξανθὴν ἀπεκείρατο χεῖρην
τὴν ῥα Σπερχεῖω ποταμῷ τρέφε τηλεθύωσαν·
ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπεν ἰδὼν ἐπὶ οἶνοπα πόντον.

Σπερχεῖ', ἄλλως σοί γε πατὴρ ἤρῃσατο Πηλεὺς
κεισέ με νοστήσαντα φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαίαν
σοί τε κόμην κέρειν.

"Oct. 13th.

"I have discovered the reference to the Cephissus. It is from *Pausanias* 1, 37, 3. I transcribe the passage: you will notice the reference to the Spercheius of the *Iliad*.

"πρὶν δὲ διαβῆναι τὸν Κηφισόν, Θεοδώρου μνημᾶ ἐστὶ τραγωδιᾶν ὑποκριναμένου τῶν καθ' αὐτὸν ἄριστα. Ἀγάλματα δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ Μνησιμάχης, τὸ δὲ ἕτερον ἀνάθημα κειρομένου οἱ τὴν κόμην τοῦ παιδὸς ἐπὶ τῷ Κηφισῷ. Καθεστάναι δὲ ἐκ παλαιῶν καὶ τοῖς πᾶσι τοῦτο Ἕλλησι τῇ Ὀμήρου τις ἂν τεκμαίροιο ποιήσει, ὃς τὸν Πηλέα εὐξασθαι φησι τῷ Σπερχειῷ κερεῖν ἀνασωθέντος ἐκ Τροίας Ἀχιλλέως τὴν κόμην.

"There can be little doubt that Wordsworth had this passage in mind. The Cephissus is the Attic one; this is a statue, which Pausanias saw on the banks of the river, of the son of Mnesimache cutting his locks over the stream."

Professor Campbell writes:—"The Homeric passage is *Iliad* 23, 140-151, where Achilles cuts off for Patroclus the lock of hair, which *his father Peleus* had vowed to the river Spercheius in case of his son's safe return. This is referred to by Plato,—*Rep.* 3, 391 B,—who regards it as an act of impiety to have given that, which was sacred to the river, to a dead body.

"Unless the passage in Pausanias is singularly apposite, I should think that this passage must have been in Wordsworth's mind, and that by a perfectly legitimate use of poetic freedom, in speaking of the later Greek civilisation, he had put the Attic in place of the Pthiotic river."

Since receiving Mr Heard's letter, I have found that Wordsworth possessed a copy of Thomas Taylor's translation of Pausanias' "*Description of Greece*," published in 1794, a copy of that work having been sold at the Rydal Mount sale in 1859. Bishop Wordsworth of St Andrews has also directed my attention to the following note to Pope's translation of the *Iliad*, a copy of which his uncle possessed. Book xxiii. 175.

"It was the custom of the ancients not only to offer their own hair, but likewise to consecrate that of their children to the river-gods of their country. This is what Pausanias shews in his *Attic*; *Before you pass the Cephisa*, says he, *you find the tomb of Theodorus, who was he most excellent actor of the time for tragedy; and, on the banks you see two statues, one of Mnesimachus, and the other of his son, who cut off his hair in honour of the rivers; for that this was in all ages the custom of the Greeks, may be inferred from Homer's poetry, where Peleus promises by a solemn vow to consecrate to the river Spercheius the hair of his son, if he returns safe from the Trojan war.* This custom was likewise in Egypt, where Philostratus tells us that Memnon consecrated his hair to the Nile. This practice of Achilles was imitated by Alexander at the funeral of Hephæstius. *Spondanus.*"

It is very likely that Wordsworth had read this note to the annotated edition (1763) of Pope's *Homer*; but it is also probable that he was familiar with the passage in Pausanias.

NOTE G.

(See p. 312.)

Many additional particulars regarding John Gough * may be found in Cornelius Nicholson's *Annals of Kendal*, pp. 355-368 (Whitaker and Coy., 1861).

He was born in 1757 and died in 1825. "Before the completion of his third year he was attacked with small-pox, which deprived him of his sight. The whole globe of his left eye was destroyed: the damage done to the other was not so extensive: for, though the greater part of the corner was rendered opaque, there was a minute pellucid speck to the right of the pupil which permitted a ray of light to fall upon the verge of the retina, and thus he was enabled to distinguish between day and night: but he had no perception of the form or colour of objects around him; so that, for all useful purposes, vision was completely lost." But his marvellous sense of touch, as described by Wordsworth, was in no degree exaggerated. In his eighth summer, he began the study of botany; and pursued it systematically in his thirteenth year. "His method of examining plants must be briefly told. Systems of classification were but little valued, except so far as they aided him in recognising individual form. The plant to be examined was held by the root or base in one hand, while the fingers of the other travelled slowly upwards over the stem, branches, and leaves, till they reached the flower. If the species had been already met with, this procedure was sufficient for its recognition; if it proved to be a novelty, its class was first determined by the insertion of the tip of his tongue within the flower: thus he discerned the number and arrangement of the stamens and pistils. When the flower was small he requested his reader to ascertain these points with a lens. The class and order being determined, the genus was next worked out, word by word of the description, so far at least as the state of the specimen would allow. But his perceptive power over form was most conspicuous in the analysis of species. It was truly wonderful to witness the rapidity with which his fingers ran among the leaves, taking cognisance of their divisions, shape, and secretions, and of the presence or absence of hairs. The finest down was detected by a stem or leaf being drawn gently

* The mention of John Gough's name suggests the Charles Gough commemorated in the Poem *Fidelity* (Vol. III. pp. 35-38). And I may here add a fact, which has only recently come to my knowledge, that this Charles Gough was killed on the Keppelcove side of Swirrell Edge, and not at Red Tarn, as described in the poem.

across the border of his lower lip ; so fine indeed that a young eye often required a lens to verify the truth of the perception. Another peculiarity is worthy of notice. Repeated perusal of descriptions had enabled him to prefigure in his mind's eye, the form without the presence of specimens ; so that, when a species for the first time came within his touch, he at once named it from memory. . . It was probably, on one of these occasions, that Mr Wordsworth, while describing the little cushion-like plant, with white roots and purple flowers, growing near Grisdale Tarn, caught the first glimpse of that conception which were afterwards expanded into the beautiful picture given of Mr Gough in *The Excursion*."

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in his Essay on *The Soul and its Organs of Sense*, refers to him as "not only an excellent mathematician, but an infallible botanist and zoologist. He has frequently, at first feel, corrected the mistakes of the most experienced sportsmen, with regard to the birds or vermin which they had killed, when it chanced to be a variety or rare species, so completely resembling the common one, that it required great steadiness of observation to detect the difference, even after it had been pointed out." "Good heavens!" added Coleridge, "why his face sees all over!"

Gough died in the 69th year of his age ; and he was buried, not as Wordsworth puts it in *The Excursion*, at Grasmere, but in the Churchyard of Kendal. What is more remarkable is that he lived for ten years after *The Excursion* was printed ; and Wordsworth must have written the passage in the Seventh Book referring to Gough in anticipation of his death, probably 13 years before he died.

Mr John Watson of Kendal tells me that he has had lately put into his hands a MS. autobiography of Gough. Mr Watson has himself written an interesting sketch of the blind botanist.

NOTE H.

Perhaps the most interesting contemporary criticism of Wordsworth was that by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Charles Lamb.

Lamb's critical estimates are contained in the letters he wrote to Wordsworth, on receiving presentation copies of his poems as they appeared. These are preserved in the two volumes of his *Letters*, edited by Thomas Noon Talfourd in 1836, and in the *Final Memorials* which followed in 1848. It was my original intention to insert these remarks at the close of each poem to which they refer ; but it was found that the drift of many of the letters, and the scope of the whole criticism, would in some instances be entirely lost, if the extract was limited to the remark made on a single poem ; and, as it would have been quite inadmissible to repeat the extracts in the notes appended to several poems, I decided to print the whole of these criticisms of Lamb's together in an appendix to one of the volumes. At page 207

of Vol. IV., reference is made to Lamb's remarks on *The Force of Prayer*, and it was at first intended that these should appear in the Appendix to that volume. As Lamb refers, however, at some length to *The Excursion*, the most appropriate place, in which to reproduce his criticism as a whole, is the Appendix to Vol V.; and it is accordingly printed here, with the exception of the note to *The Waggoner*, which appeared in Vol. III. (Appendix I.), and that in *The White Doe of Rylstone*, which was printed in Vol. IV.

The following was written to Wordsworth in the year 1804, and refers to the publication of the third edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in that year.

"I had already borrowed your second volume. What please me most are, 'The Song of Lucy;' *Simon's sickly daughter*, in 'The Sexton,' made me cry. Next to these are the description of the continuous echoes in the story of 'Joanna's Laugh,' where the mountains and all the scenery absolutely seem alive; and that fine Shakspearian character of the 'happy man,' in the 'Brothers,'

——'that creeps about the fields,
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his cheek or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun
Write Fool upon his forehead!'

"I will mention one more—the delicate and curious feeling in the wish of the 'Cumberland Beggar,' that he may have about him the melody of birds, although he hear them not. Here the mind knowingly passes a fiction upon herself, first substituting her own feelings for the Beggar's, and in the same breath detecting the fallacy, will not part with the wish. The 'Poet's Epitaph' is disfigured, to my taste, by the common satire upon parsons and lawyers in the beginning, and the coarse epithet of 'pinpoint' in the sixth stanza."

"DEAR WORDSWORTH,—Thanks for the books you have given me. I have not bound the poems yet. I wait till people have done borrowing them. I think I shall get a chain, and chain them to my shelves, *more Bodleiano*, and people may come and read them at chain's length. For of those who borrow, some read slow; some mean to read, but don't read; and some neither read nor mean to read, but borrow to leave you an opinion of their sagacity.

C. LAMB."

"DEAR WORDSWORTH,—You have made me very proud with your successive book presents. I have been carefully through the two volumes, to see that nothing was omitted which used to be there. I think I miss nothing but 'a character in the antithetic manner,' which I do not know why you left out,—the moral to the boys building the giant, the omission whereof leaves it, in my mind, less complete,—and one admirable line gone (or something come instead of it), 'the stone-chat and

the glancing sandpiper,' which was a line quite alive. I demand these at your hand. I am glad that you have not sacrificed a verse to these scoundrels. I would not have had you offer up the poorest rag that lingered upon the stript shoulders of little Alice Fell, to have atoned all their malice ; I would not have given 'em a red cloak to save their souls. I am afraid lest the substitution of a shell (a flat falsification of the history) for the household implement, as it stood at first, was a kind of tub thrown out to the beast, or rather thrown out for him. The tub was a good honest tub in its place, and nothing could fairly be said against it. You said you made the alteration for the 'friendly reader,' but the 'malicious' will take it to himself. If you give 'em an inch, etc. The Preface is noble, and such as you should write. I wish I could set my name to it, Imprimatur,—but you have set it there yourself, and I thank you. I had rather be a doorkeeper in your margin than have their proudest text swelling with my eulogies. The poems in the volumes, which are new to me, are so much in the old tone that I hardly received them as novelties. Of those, of which I had no previous knowledge, the 'Four Yew Trees,'* and the mysterious company which you have assembled there, most struck me—'Death the Skeleton, and Time the Shadow.' It is a sight not for every youthful poet to dream of ; it is one of the last results he must have gone thinking on for years far. 'Laodamia' is a very original poem ; I mean original with reference to your own manner. You have nothing like it. I should have seen it in a strange place, and greatly admired it, but not suspected its derivation.

"I am almost sorry that you printed extracts from these first poems,† or that you did not print them at length. They do not read to me as they do all together. Besides, they have diminished the value of the original (which I possess) as a curiosity. I have hitherto kept them distinct in my mind as referring to a particular period of your life. All the rest of your poems are so much of a piece, they might have been written in the same week ; these decidedly speak of an earlier period. They tell more of what you had been reading. We were glad to see the poems 'by a female friend.' The one on the wind is masterly, but not new to us. Being only three, perhaps you might have clapt a D. at the corner, and let it have past as a printer's mark to the uninitiated,

* The poem on the four great yew-trees of Borrowdale, which the poet has, by the most potent magic of the imagination, converted into a temple for the ghastly forms of Death and Time "to meet at noontide," a passage surely not surpassed in any English poetry written since the days of Milton.—(THOMAS NOON TALFOURD.)

† He refers to the extracts from the *Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, published amongst the "Juvenile Pieces," in the edition of 1815.—ED.

as a delightful hint to the letter instructed. As it is, except a formal criticism on the poems of your female friend, and she must expect it.

“C. LAMB.”

“TO MR WORDSWORTH.

“Excuse this maddish letter ; I am too tired to write *in formâ*.

“DEAR WORDSWORTH,—The more I read of your two last volumes, the more I feel it necessary to make my acknowledgements for them in more than one short letter. The ‘Night Piece,’ to which you refer me, I meant fully to have noticed ; but, the fact is, I come so fluttering and languid from business, tired with thoughts of it, frightened with fears of it, that when I get a few minutes to sit down to scribble (an action of the hand now seldom natural to me—I mean voluntary pen-work) I lose all presential memory of what I had intended to say. So I had meant to have mentioned ‘Yarrow Visited,’ with that stanza, ‘But thou, that didst appear so fair ;’ than which I think no lovelier stanza can be found in the wide world of poetry;—yet the poem, on the whole, seems condemned to leave behind it a melancholy of imperfect satisfaction, as if you had wronged the feeling with which, in what preceded it, you had resolved never to visit it, and as if the Muse had determined, in the most delicate manner, to make you, and *scarce make you*, feel it. Else, it is far superior to the other, which has but one exquisite verse in it, the last but one or the two last—this has all fine, except, perhaps, that *that* of ‘studious ease and generous cares’ has a little tinge of the *less romantic* about it. ‘The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale’ is a charming counterpart to ‘Poor Susan,’ with the addition of that delicacy towards aberrations from the strict path, which is so fine in the ‘Old Thief and the Boy by his side,’ which always brings water into my eyes. Perhaps it is the worse for being a repetition ; ‘Susan’ stood for the representative of poor *Rus in Urbe*. There was quite enough to stamp the moral of the thing never to be forgotten ; ‘bright volumes of vapour,’ &c. The last verse of Susan was to be got rid of, at all events. It threw a kind of dubiety upon Susan’s moral conduct. Susan is a servant maid. I see her trundling her mop, and contemplating the whirling phenomenon through blurred optics ; but to term her ‘a poor outcast’ seems as much as to say that poor Susan was no better than she should be, which I trust was not what you meant to express. Robin Goodfellow supports himself without that *stick* of a moral which you have thrown away ; but how I can be brought in *felo de omittendo* for that ending to the Boy-builders is a mystery. I can’t say positively now,—I only know that no line oftener or readier occurs than that ‘Light-hearted boys, I will build up a giant with you.’ It comes naturally, with a warm holiday, and the freshness of the blood. It is a perfect summer amulet, that I tie round my legs to quicken their motion when I go out a maying. (N.B.) I don’t often go out a

may;—*Must* is the tense with me now. Do you take the pun? Young Romilly is divine;* the reasons of his mother's grief being remediless—I never saw parental love carried up so high, towering above the other loves—Shakespeare had done something for the filial, in 'Cordelia,' and, by implication, for the fatherly too, in Lear's resentment; he left it for you to explore the depths of the maternal heart. I get stupid, and flat, and flattering; what's the use of letting you know what good things you have written, or I hope I may add—that I know them to be good? Apropos—when I first opened upon the just-mentioned poem, in a careless tone, I said to Mary, as if putting a riddle, 'What is good for a bootless bene?' To which, with infinite presence of mind (as the jest-book has it), she answered, 'A shoeless pea.' It was the first she ever made. Joke the second I make. You distinguish well in your old preface, between the verses of Dr Johnson, of the 'Man in the Strand,' and that from 'The Babes in the Wood,' I was thinking whether taking your own glorious lines—

'And from the love which was in her soul
For her youthful Romilly;'

which, by the love I bear my own soul, I think have no parallel in any, the best old ballads, and just altering it to—

'And from the great respect she felt
For Sir Samuel Romilly,'

would not have explained the boundaries of prose expression, and poetic feeling, nearly as well.

"Excuse my levity on such an occasion. I never felt deeply in my life if that poem did not make me, both lately and when I read it in MS. No alderman ever longed after a haunch of buck venison more

* The poem, entitled, "The Force of Prayer," developing the depths of a widowed mother's grief, whose only son has been drowned in attempting to leap over the precipice of the "Wharf" at Bolton Abbey. The first line, printed in old English characters, from some old English ballad,

"What is good for a bootless bene?"

suggests Miss Lamb's single pun. The following are the profoundest stanzas among those which excite her brother's most just admiration:—

"If for a lover the lady wept,
A solace she might borrow
From death, and from the passion of death;—
Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.

She weeps not for the wedding-day
Which was to be to-morrow:
Her hope was a further-looking hope,
And hers is a mother's sorrow."

—(T. N. T.)

than I for a spiritual taste of that 'White Doe' you promise. I am sure it is superlative, or will be when *drest*, i.e., printed. All things read raw to me in MS.; to compare *magna parvis*, I cannot endure my own writings in that state. The only one which, I think, would not very much win upon me in print is Peter Bell. But I am not certain. You ask me about your preface. I like both that and the supplement without an exception. The account of what you mean by imagination is very valuable to me. It will help me to like some things in poetry better, which is a little humiliating in me to confess. I thought I could not be instructed in that science (I mean the critical), as I once heard old obscene, beastly Peter Pindar, in a dispute on Milton, say he thought that if he had reason to value himself upon one thing more than another, it was in knowing what good verse was. Who looked over your proof-sheets and left *ordebo* in that line of Virgil?—

Yours dear W., and all yours,

C. LAMB.*

The following letter is in acknowledgment of an early copy of "The Excursion":—

TO MR WORDSWORTH.

"DEAR WORDSWORTH,—I cannot tell you how pleased I was at the receipt of the great armful of poetry which you have sent me; and to get it before the rest of the world too! I have gone quite through with it, and was thinking to have accomplished that pleasure a second time before I wrote to thank you, but M. B. came in (while we were out), and made holy theft of it, but we expect restitution in a day or two. It is the noblest conversational poem I ever read—a day in Heaven. The part (or rather main body) which has left the sweetest odour on my memory (a bad term for the remains of an impression so recent) is the Tales of the Churchyard; the only girl among seven brethren, born out of due time, and (not duly) taken away again; the deaf man and the blind man; the Jacobite and Hanoverian, whom antipathies reconcile; the Scarron-entry of the rustivating parson upon his solitude;—these were all new to me too. My having known the story of Margaret (at the beginning), a very old acquaintance, even as long back as when I saw you first at Stowey, did not make her reappearance less fresh. I don't know what to pick out of this best of books upon the best subjects for partial naming. That gorgeous sunset is famous;* I think it must have been the identical one we saw on Salisbury Plain five years ago, that drew P—— from the card-table, where he had sat from rise of that luminary to its unequalled setting; but neither he nor I had gifted eyes to see those symbols of common things glorified;

* The passage to which the allusion applies does not picture a sunset, but the effect of sunlight on a receding mist among the mountains, in the second book of "The Excursion."—(T. N. T.)

such as the prophets saw them in that sunset—the wheel, the potter's clay, the washpot, the wine-press, the almond-tree rod, the baskets of figs, the fourfold visaged head, the throne, and Him that sat thereon.*

“One feeling I was particularly struck with, as what I recognised so very lately at Harrow Church on entering it after a hot and secular day's pleasure, the instantaneous coolness and calming, almost transforming properties of a country church just entered; a certain fragrance which it has, either from its holiness, or being kept shut all the week, or the air that is let in being pure country, exactly what you have reduced into words; but I am feeling that which I cannot express. The reading your lines about it fixed me for a time, a monument in Harrow Church; do you know it? with its fine long spire, white as washed marble, to be seen, by vantage of its high site, as far as Salisbury spire itself almost.

“I shall select a day or two, very shortly, when I am coolest in brain, to have a steady second reading, which I feel will lead to many more, for it will be a stock book with me, while eyes or spectacles shall be lent me. There is a great deal of noble matter about mountain scenery, yet not so much as to overpower and discountenance a poor Londoner or south-countryman entirely, though Mary seems to have felt it occasionally a little too powerfully, for it was her remark during reading it, that by your system it was doubtful whether a liver in town had a soul to be saved. She almost trembled for that invisible part of us in her. . . .

[Lamb was delighted with the proposition, made through Southey, that he should review “The Excursion” in the “Quarterly,” though he had never before attempted contemporaneous criticism, and cherished a dislike to it, which the event did not diminish. The ensuing letter was addressed while meditating on his office, and uneasy lest he should lose it for want of leisure. (T. N. Talfourd.)]

“MY DEAR W. . . . I reclaimed your book, which Hazlitt has mercilessly kept, only two days ago, and have made shift to read it again with shattered brain. It does not lose—rather some parts have come out with a prominence I did not perceive before—but such was my aching head yesterday (Sunday) that the book was like a mountain landscape to one that should walk on the edge of a precipice; I perceived beauty dizzily. . . . Mary thanks you, and feels highly grateful for your ‘Patent of Nobility,’ and acknowledges the author of ‘The Excursion’ as the legitimate fountain of honour. We both agree

Fix'd resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified;
Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest powers,
For admiration and mysterious awe. (See p. 103)—Ed.

that, to our feeling, Ellen is best as she is. To us there would have been something repugnant in her challenging her Penance as a dowry; the fact is explicable, but how few are those to whom it would have been rendered explicit. The unlucky reason of the detention of 'The Excursion' was Hazlitt, for whom M. Burney borrowed it on Friday. His remarks had some vigour in them,* particularly something about an old ruin being *too modern for your Primeval Nature, and about a lichen*; I forget the passage, but the whole wore an air of despatch. That objection which M. Burney had imbibed from him about Voltaire, I explained to M. B. (or tried) exactly on your principle of its being a characteristic speech.† That it was no settled comparative estimate of Voltaire with any of his own tribe of buffoons—no injustice, even if *you* spoke it, for I dared say you never could relish "Candide." I know I tried to get through it about a twelvemonth since, and couldn't for the dulness. Now I think I have a wider range in buffoonery than you. Too much toleration perhaps. . . ."

"DEAR W. . . . The "scapes of the great god Pan, who appeared among your mountains some dozen years since, and his narrow chance of being submerged by the swains, afforded me much pleasure. I can conceive the water-nymphs pulling for him. . . . By this way, I deprived myself of "Sir Alfred Irthing," and the reflexions that conclude his story, which are the flower of the poem. Hazlitt had given the reflections before me. . . .

C. LAMB."

NOTE I.

(See p. 6.)

The Yew-tree, which was "the pride of Lorton Vale," is now a ruin, and has lost all its ancient majesty: but, until the close of 1883, the "fraternal four" of Borrowdale were still to be seen "in grand assemblage." Every one who has ever felt the power of Wordsworth's poetry,—and especially every one who has visited the Seathwaite valley, and read the poem *Yew-Trees*, under the shade of that once "solemn and capacious grove,"—must feel as if they had lost a personal friend, when they hear that the Grove is gone. The great gale of December 11, 1883, smote it fiercely, uprooting one of the trees, and blowing the others to ribbands. The following is Mr Rawnsley's account of the disaster, and the sonnets which follow it are also his.

"Last week the gale that ravaged England did the Lake country much harm. We could spare many of the larch plantations, and could

* This refers to an article of Hazlitt on *The Excursion* in "The Examiner."—(T. N. T.)

† The passage in which the copy of "Candide," found in the apartment of the Recluse, is described as the "dull production of a scoffer's brain," which had excited Hazlitt to energetic vindication of Voltaire from the charge of dulness.—(T. N. T.)

hear (with a sigh) of the fall of the giant Scotch firs opposite the little Scafell Inn at Rosthwaite, and that Watendlath had lost its pines ; but who could spare those ancient Yews, the great

‘Fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove ;
Hugh trunks ! and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwined fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved.’

“For beneath their pillared shade since Wordsworth wrote his poem, that Yew-tree grove has suggested to many a wanderer up Borrowdale, and visitant to the Natural Temple, ‘an ideal grove in which the ghostly masters of mankind meet, and sleep, and offer worship to the Destiny that abides above them, while the mountain flood, as if from another world, makes music to which they dimly listen.’

“These Yew-trees, seemingly

‘Produced too slowly ever to decay,
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed,’

have been ruthlessly overthrown. One has been uprooted bodily ; all the leaders and branches of the others have been wrenched from the main trunk ; and the three still standing are bare poles and broken wreckage. Until one visits the spot one can have no conception of the wholesale destruction that the hurricane has wrought ; until he looks on the huge rosy-hearted branches he cannot guess the tremendous force with which the tornado had fallen upon that ‘sable roof of boughs.’

“For tornado or whirlwind it must needs have been. The Yews grew under the eastern flank of the hill called Base Brown. The gale raged from the westward. One could hardly believe it possible that the trees could have been touched by it ; for the barrier hill on which they grew, —and under whose shelter they have seen centuries of storm,—goes straight upwards, betwixt them and the west. It was only realizable when, standing amid the wreckage, and looking across the valley, it was seen that a larch plantation had been entirely levelled, and evidently by a wind that was coming from the east, and directly toward the Yew-trees. On enquiring at Seathwaite Farm, one found that all the slates blown from the roof of that building on the west side, had been whirled up clean over the roof : and we can only surmise that the winds rushing from the west and north-west, and meeting the bastions of Glaramara and the Sty-head slopes, were whirled round in the *cul-de-sac* of the valley, and moved with churning motion back from east to west over the Seathwaite Farm, and so in straight line across the beck, and up the slope to the Yew-tree cluster. With what a wrenching, and with what violence, these trees were in a moment shattered, only those can guess who now witness the ruins of the pillared shade, upon ‘the grassless floor of red-brown hue.’

"Never again can 'trembling Hope' meet there 'at noontide' with 'Time the Shadow;' but the 'ghostly shapes' of 'Fear' and 'Silence,' with 'Death the Skeleton,' can still celebrate 'united worship;' and much more now than ever before—since the winds will pass the tree-stumps, bare of leafage—the readers of Wordsworth's poem on the Borrowdale Yews may sadly, and

'in mute repose
Still lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.'

"A sense that something has passed away from the earth will possess all feeling hearts, who learn that 'the fraternal four' of Borrowdale have fallen victims to the merciless winds; and that pilgrims to the Seathwaite valley can never again behold that 'solemn and capacious grove' as the poet knew it, when he peopled it with his imagination."

A TRILOGY OF SONNETS ON THE YEWS OF BORROWDALE.

In Memoriam.

I.

Blind was the storm, from wild Atlantic brought,
That in the moonless night toward our coast
Fierce breathed, and full of cries from shipmen lost,
Smote on the hills of Cumberland, and wrought
Woe irremediable, in worlds of thought
And gentlest sphere of poesy; Here most
We mourn, where many a year the pilgrim host
From far the dark Yew's oracle had sought.
But long as Derwent to the sea shall pour
Her tears that spring from Glaramara's side,
She must lament this sacrilegious wrong,
Must grieve that to our poet was denied
To keep one grove—the 'great Fraternal Four'—
A mountain shrine for mystery and song.

II.

Now from the sacred grove of Borrowdale
Must Fear, and Hope the Trembler, steal away,
Nor ever meet at midmost hour of day
Silence and Foresight, and the Shadow pale
Cast o'er the face of nations like a veil
With that twin spectre Time; while blank dismay
Cowers by the roofless Temple in decay,
And moss-grown altars blasted by the gale.

Still where the unaccustomed sunlight gleams
 Dark as her shadow sorrow shall rehearse
 The havoc of the undiscerning storm.
 But fresh as Glaramara's inmost streams
 The music of the poet's marvellous verse
 Shall dirge-like fill the Shrine's deserted form.

III.

Ill could we spare the Tree St Patrick knew,*
 When first for Christ to these rude vales he spoke,
 And better far had fallen the Rydal Oak
 Or Time's vast hollow monument, the Yew†
 Which stands in sight of Wetherlam : Ah few
 The souls who then had felt that tempest's stroke,
 So many bonds about the heart had broke,
 And breaking swept old memories from view.
 To this lone grove, by storm in ruins hurled,
 Had Glaramara down the centuries seen
 Hope and mute Prayer and Love and Mystery throng ;
 And, since our Wordsworth murmured out his song,
 Its dark four-pillared vault of evergreen
 Was Temple for the music of the world.

This Yew-tree Grove is doubtless immortal in English literature, and will live as long as Wordsworth is studied, and when every memorial of the man is a thing of the past. It has been suggested that other yew trees should be planted on the spot, on the principle, *Le roi est mort : vive le roi !* But such a continuity is scarcely to be wished. It may be as undesirable to restore the "natural temple" that has fallen in Borrowdale, as to rebuild Stonehenge or Stennis. Immortality belongs to nothing physical.

NOTE K.

(See pp. 126 - 7.)

The following extracts from Miss Wordsworth's Journal, kept at Alfoxden, will illustrate these passages of *The Excursion* :—

"Jan. 21, 1798.—Walked on the hill tops : a warm day : sate under the firs in the park. The tops of the beeches of a brown red or crimson. The oaks, fended from the sea-breeze, thick with feathery sea-green moss, as a grove not stripped of its leaves. Moss cups more proper than acorns for fairy goblets. . . ."

"23d.—The sound of the sea distinctly heard on the tops of the hills,

* The Patterdale yew went down in the same storm.

† The great yew in Yewdale.

which we could never hear in summer. We attribute this partly to the bareness of the trees, but chiefly to the absence of the singing of birds, and the hum of insects, and that noiseless noise which lives in the summer air. The villages marked out by beautiful beds of smoke ; the turf fading into the mountain road : the scarlet flowers of the moss.

"26th.—Walked upon the hill tops : followed the sheep-tracks till we overlooked the larger coombe. Sat in the sunshine, the distant sheep-bells, the sound of the stream : the woodman winding along the half marked road, with his laden pony : locks of wool still spangled with the dew-drops : the blue-grey sea shaded with immense masses of cloud, not streaked. The sheep glittering in the sunshine. Returned through the wood : the trees skirting the wood being exposed more directly to the action of the sea-breeze, stripped of the net-work of their upper boughs, which are stiff and erect like black skeletons. The ground strewn with the red berries of the holly.

"February 3d. — A mild morning, the windows open at breakfast, the redbreasts singing in the garden. Walked with Coleridge over the hills. The sea at first obscured by vapour. That vapour afterwards slid in one mighty mass along the sea-shore : the islands, and one point of land clear beyond it. The distant country (which was purple in the clear dull air) overhung by straggling clouds that sailed over it, appeared like the darker clouds which are often seen at a great distance, apparently motionless, while the nearer ones pass quickly over them, driven by the lower winds. I never saw such a union of earth, sky, and sea. The clouds beneath our feet spread themselves to the water, and the clouds of the sky almost joined them. . . .

"8th.—Went up the Park, and over the tops of the hills till we came to a new and very delicious pathway, which conducted us to the Coombe ; sat a considerable time upon the heath ; its surface restless and glittering with the motion of the scattered piles of withered grass, and the waving of the spiders' threads. . . .

"26th. — . . . Walked with Coleridge nearly to Stowey after dinner. A very clear afternoon. We lay sidelong upon the turf, and gazed upon the landscape, till it melted into more than natural loveliness. The sea very uniform—of a pale greyish blue, only one distant bay bright and blue as the sky, a perfect image of delight. Walked to the top of a high hill, to see a fortification ; again sat down to feed upon the prospect ; a magnificent scene curiously spread out for minute inspection, though so extensive. A winter prospect shows every cottage, every farm, and the forms of distant trees, such as in summer have no distinguishable mark. . . .

"2d April.—Coleridge came, and staid all night. We walked in the wood, and sat under the trees : one half of the wood perfectly still, while the wind was making a loud noise behind us. The still trees only gently bowed their heads as if listening to the wind : the hollies in the thick wood unshaken by the blast," &c., &c.

NOTE L.

(See pp. 141 and 418.)

Since the foregoing sheets had gone to press, I have had access to the original MSS. of *The Excursion*; and have found that the point which is discussed—both in the note to p. 141 and in note E in this Appendix—is set conclusively at rest, by one of the earlier (discarded) readings of the text in Wordsworth's own handwriting.

“and verily was cheered
By the blithe Mocking Bird, and heard alone
The melancholy cry of whip-pow-will.”

Another version of the last line is also given,

“The plaintive cry repeated whip-poor-will.”

I now entertain no doubt that Wordsworth had first of all met with the name of this bird, whip-pow-will, in Waterton's *Wanderings* (a copy of which he possessed), and that he afterwards exchanged it—before sending his *Excursion* to press, in 1814—for the more musical Indian name, Muccawiss.